



Photo provided by Pierce Township Fire Department



Photo by Kaique Rocha on Unsplash



PIERCE
Township

COVID-19 Impact Framework Plan

December 2020 - February 2021

DATA DRIVEN
ECONOMICS
ANALYTICS

RESEARCH

INSIGHTS

STRATEGY

Red Tiger Investments, LLC

kolar
experience
Institute™

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Red Tiger Investments, LLC

Red Tiger Investments focuses on inspiring catalytic economic development through planning, real estate, public-private partnerships and collaboration. We imagine and create innovative strategies for economic prosperity.



KEI™ is a research and insight institute. Our strategy is to use data analytics to measure the positive impact of place on people, with the ultimate goal to drive better business results.

Executive Summary

Kolar Experience Institute and Red Tiger Investments were engaged to develop a COVID-19 Impact: Framework Plan for the portion of the SR-125 commercial corridor that was previously located in Amelia. The plan includes data-driven analysis on the impact from COVID-19 from the businesses', the residents' and city's perspectives.

Recommendations include methodologies for Civic Brand Building--placemaking, gateways, wayfinding and celebrating unique community assets--to drive economic recovery.

The plan concludes with an activation plan for Pierce Township that uses proven methods to create an environment attractive to end-users by crafting the process around existing regional industries and economic opportunities in the marketplace.



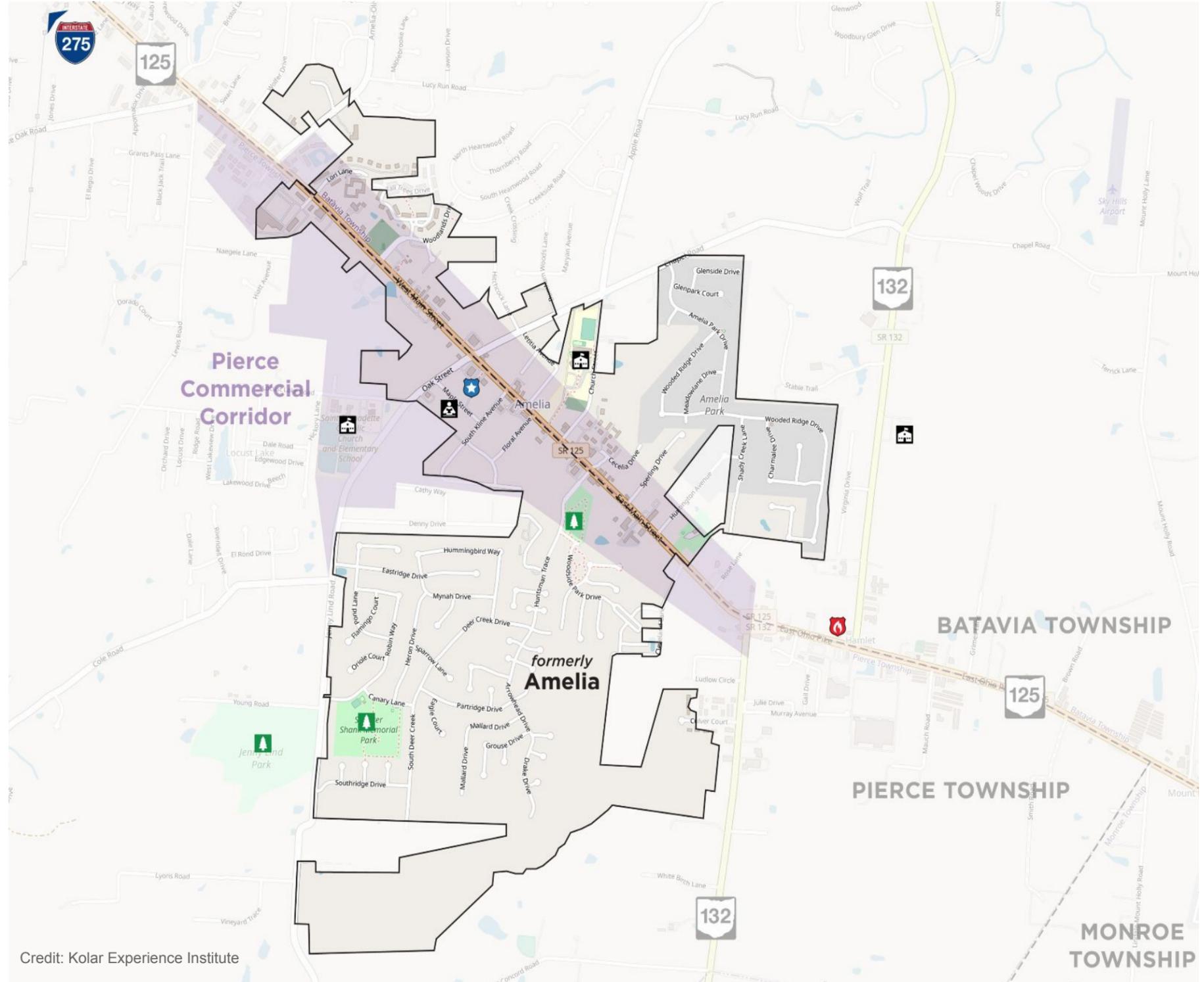
Study Area

Study Area Land Uses

The 1.5-mile Corridor is comprised of ad-hoc old and new commercial, office, retail, multi-family, agricultural and historic properties. The Corridor is anchored to the west by a 133,000 square foot Kroger Marketplace (built in 2013) and the east is flanked by cluster of fast-food restaurants (including Gold Star Chili, Grammas Pizza, and Pizza Hut).

Corridor Accessibility

Pierce Township's SR-125 Corridor Study (Sep. 2020) defines the Corridor as a "two lane roadway in each direction with a dual left-turn lane. It is classified as a minor principal artery and runs east and west with a posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour. I-275 is a freeway facility further west to the study corridor, an interconnected system of collector/local roadways exists south of the SR-125."



Existing Obstacles

1. Incorporation and integration of the former Amelia Village
 - Brand implications
 - Business contacts
 - Some former Amelia residents have a lot of animosity over the dissolution of the Village
 - Some general distrust of local government
2. Communication between private and public sectors
 - No liason or quasi-governmental organizations to facilitate connection & partnerships
 - Capacity levels at the trustee/administration level



“

[Our priority should be our] **economic future, growing community...** more people moving into the area [and] safety as all of this happens. [We need to] keep the township... a values-oriented community that is a **prosperous, safe, [and] attractive place to live.**

”

73%

of stakeholders interviewed mentioned the need for improved communication or engagement in the township.

Key Findings & Recommendations

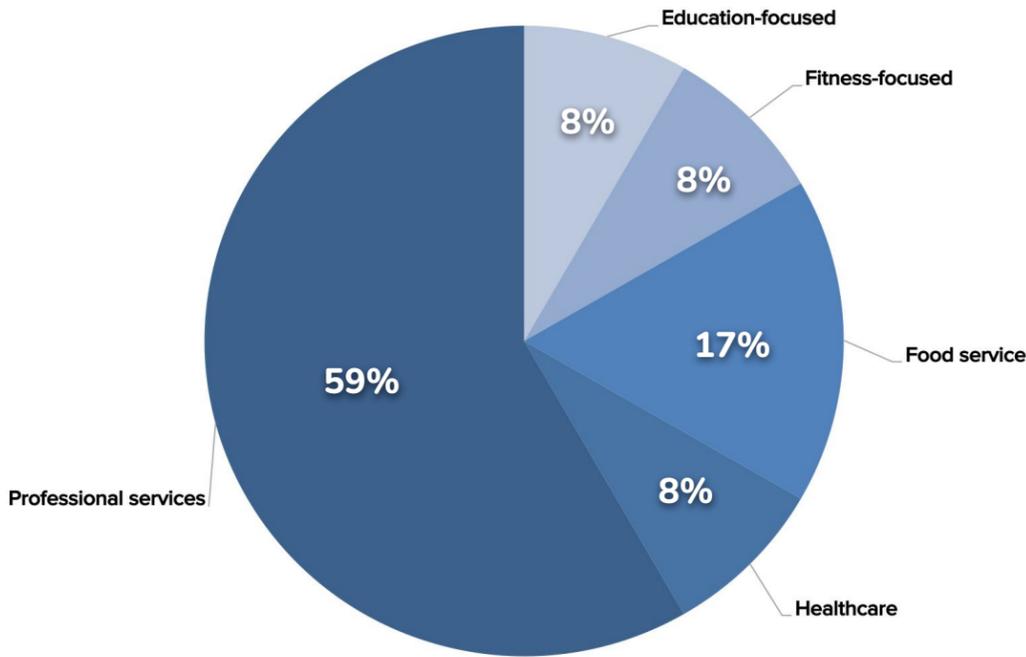
Pierce businesses minimized revenue loss and took precautions to accommodate for the economic downturn.

- Retail, restaurant, and fitness businesses showed greater revenue loss on average compared to professional service businesses.
- Business that have laid off employees are considering further layoffs, but haven't *necessarily* taken a hit in revenue
 - This could indicate that businesses are making smart economic decisions
- Consumer buying habits have changed; businesses now need to look toward the future
 - Pierce businesses know this; there is heightened fear of both economic and physical protection from the pandemic
- Businesses are looking to engage in synergistic public private partnerships but *need a strong facilitating and catalyzing force to ideate opportunities and act as the conduit for public and private partnerships*

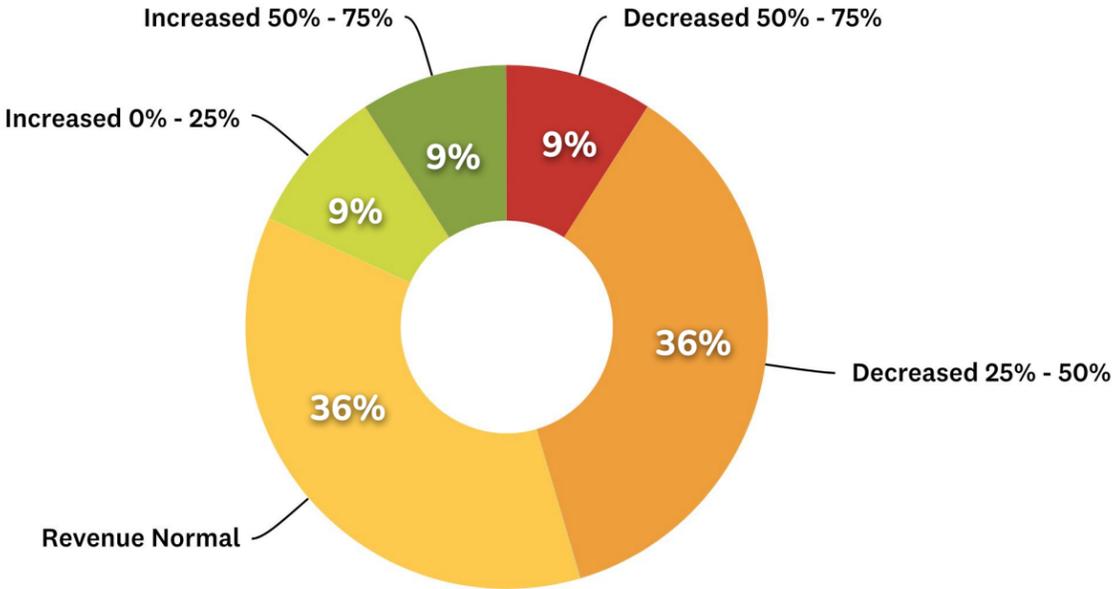
DATA ANALYZED...

<p>2020 COVID Impact Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total Respondents: 88 ● Stakeholders: 72 ● Businesses: 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 17% Co-op Ownership ○ 83% Locally-owned 	<p>2020 Community Perception Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total responses 226 ● Residents: 224 ● Businesses: 2
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Business Type Distribution



Revenue Loss Distribution



Key Findings & Recommendations

While Pierce has apparent community values, it lacks story telling; thus, the commercial corridor lacks an aligned civic identity, a sense of place and is in need of beautification.

- Pierce has underlying values of inclusivity, respect, and commitment to the common good; it's a place where strong values of respect and family run deep
- Brand storytelling and a civic identity can unify communities, establish trust, and align interests between all parties, especially if they are brought into the fold on the front end
- Once brand storytelling is underway, properties (business & residential) need to be held to a higher standard of appearance and match the desired look & feel of the township
- In order to recruit businesses to the township, Pierce needs a brand story that businesses can connect with and envision a future within

Where possible, maintain the scenic qualities and wildlife that makes the township an attractive and desirable place to live.

- Preserve and enhance the township's natural environment as it's one of Pierce's greatest qualities
- Development should complement the natural environment

Renderings for conceptual, inspirational, and education purposes only



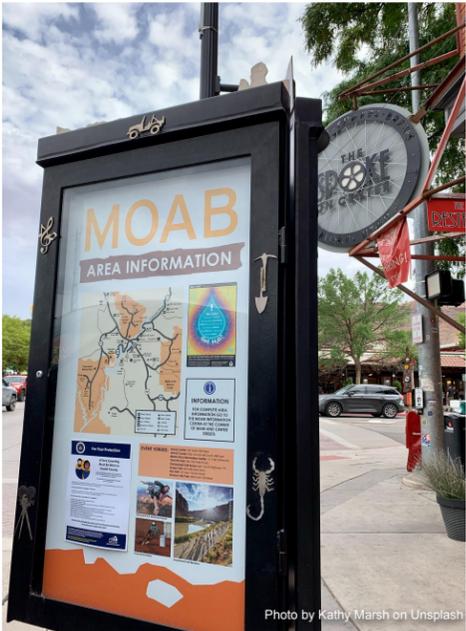
Photo provided by Pierce Township Resource Guide



Key Findings & Recommendations

There is a need for connectivity and flow within the township.

- Flow and connectivity apply to the following:
 - Pedestrian, Vehicular & Bike
 - Community Gathering & Greenspace
 - Communication
 - Electronic / Data Capabilities
- A connectivity corridor should be created linking key intersections, green “living rooms” and gathering hubs to enhance the pedestrian experience and provide ease of access to a “main street-esque” local business corridor for increased foot traffic
- Community event planning is necessary to ensure this connectivity effort has the appropriate economic impact on the township (free public wifi, park-hop events, forested hike and bike trails, etc.)
- Walkability and gathering hubs will be key criteria for more upscale and eclectic businesses looking to locate in Pierce

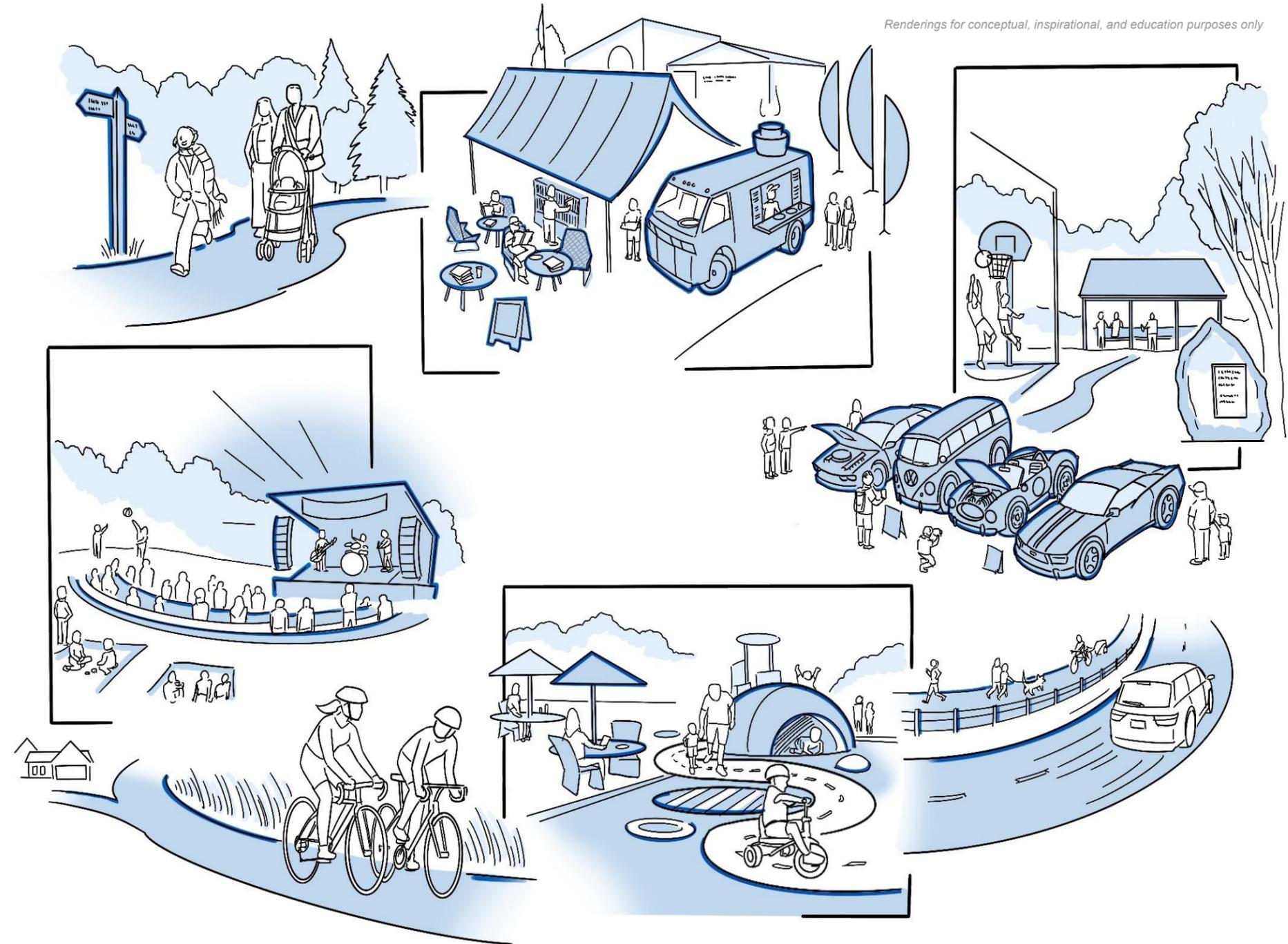


Key Findings & Recommendations

Establish walkable hubs along the Corridor comprised of mixed-uses and gathering places to serve as major destination points (“Corridor Hubs”).

- The hubs should connect the community, businesses, recreation amenities, and cultural resources integrating walkable and pedestrian friendly pathways and bike paths, while promoting business, entertainment and cultural experiences for residents
- Residents and business owners feel strongly that a farmer’s market/pavilion/space for community gathering and events is very necessary and currently lacking
- Create places where families and the community come together to interact and socialize
- Corridor Hubs will be essential in securing and recruiting unique and eclectic businesses

Renderings for conceptual, inspirational, and education purposes only



Key Findings & Recommendations

There is a need for a comprehensive outreach & communication strategy to bridge the gap.

- A monthly newsletter or a community postings board could go a long way in strengthening trust and transparency between the township and the public
- Stakeholder and community buy-in to the implementations is necessary
 - Use engagement sessions as opportunities to listen and accommodate community concerns

Pierce has a unique opportunity to extend an olive branch, uniting Pierce, the former Amelia Village, Batavia and Clermont County.

- Pierce should take the lead in streamlining business communication and access along the 125 corridor through reestablishment of a business association
- Interests are aligned amongst the businesses along the 125 corridor; the establishment of a business association should include all those with a vested interest in the area
- Build the bridge: a public-private partnership is integral to the success of a commercial corridor



Photo by [Shane Rounce](#) on [Unsplash](#)

“

I see **collaboration** to be a significant priority among **Pierce and Batavia Townships along with the county and state.** If strides are made to solicit feedback from the people and a commitment to an infrastructure...to attract new [businesses] and revitalization opportunities this will undoubtedly increase property values, strengthen schools and **provide a sense of character...improvement.**

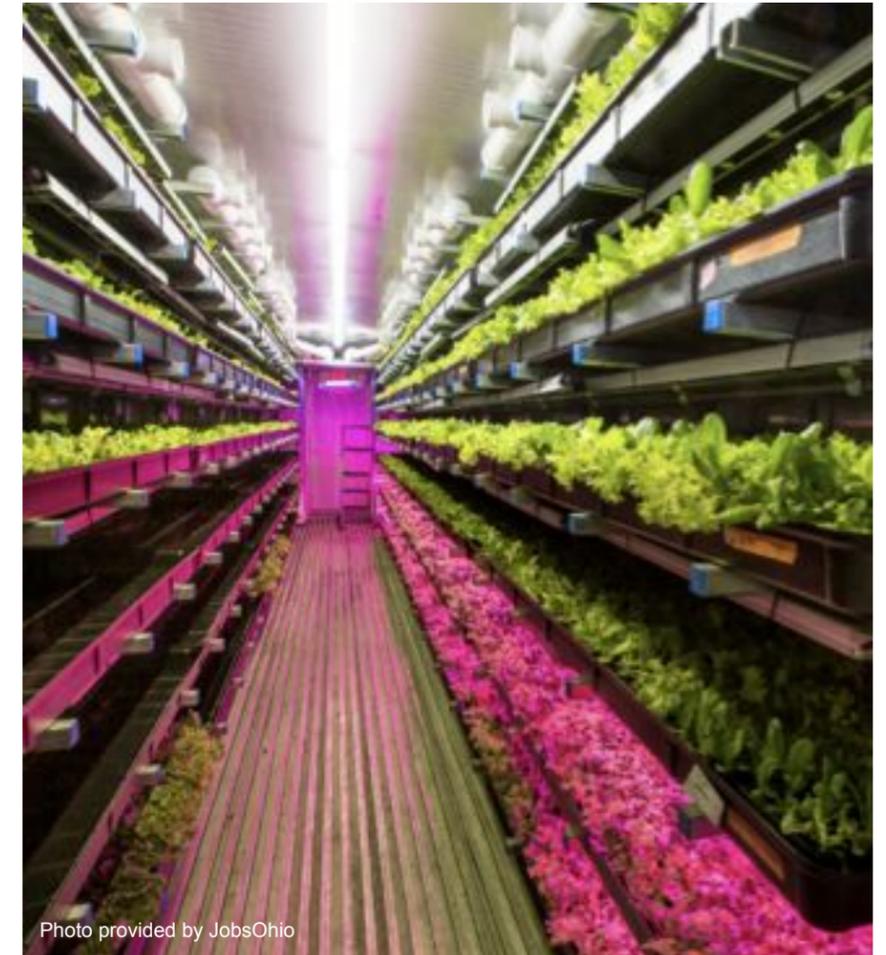
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Key Findings & Recommendations

Given the township's proximity to downtown Cincinnati to the west and rural areas to the east, a potential emerging industry to focus on is **Agricultural Technology ("Agritech")**.

- Agritech is the use of technology and technological innovation to improve the efficiency and output of agriculture
- Emerging industries and post-COVID industries attract millennials and well-paying jobs that will support the growth of quality housing, retail, local businesses, mixed-use housing, and other amenities in the community
- Redevelopment of Beckjord Power Station could be an ideal location for Agritech and Solar applications
 - Industry adjacent businesses will congregate in the commercial corridor



Key Findings & Recommendations

Establish a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) to oversee economic development and real estate activities of the township, including the establishment and development of the Corridor Hubs.

- Authorize the CIC to create and recommend economic incentive programs and development strategies
- Authorize the CIC to handle negotiations with developers and property owners
- The CIC should work closely with the Planning & Zoning Department
- Begin evaluating potential local, state and federal funding sources for the CIC
- The CIC should explore ways it can be used to control strategic properties to advance “game changing” projects along the Corridor
- The CIC could include Batavia Township representation to optimize projects and synergies between the townships due to their proximity



Photo by Dylan Gillis on Unsplash

Today CIC's in many townships presently serve a leadership role in promoting township and community economic development initiatives.



01

Introductions

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Project Team
- 1.3 Study Area
- 1.4 Objectives & Goals
- 1.5 Approach

1.1 Background

Village of Amelia

For over a year, the residents of Amelia, passionately debated over a 1% income tax imposed on all residents and workers by the Village Council.

In order to get around the tax, on November 05, 2020, the residents of Amelia voted to dissolve the Village. The portion of Amelia north of SR-125 became part of Batavia Township and the portion south became part of Pierce Township.

Since the Village of Amelia's incorporation in 1900, and until its dissolution, the Village has grown moderately with little planning guidance.

Plan

Red Tiger Investments and Kolar Experience Institute (collectively, the "Consultant") were commissioned by Pierce Township to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on the portion of the SR-125 commercial corridor that was previously located in Amelia and to optimize participation from the community to re-imagine its future.

The plan is intended to provide a framework to facilitate decision-making related to COVID impact on the business district, while serving as a living document that builds upon the township's previously established vision, mission, and strategic priorities.

Implementation

This Framework Plan along with previous studies are the initial fundamental steps required for the business corridor's post-COVID recovery and current and future positive transformation of SR-125 and its businesses.

Framework Plan implementation is contingent upon the buy-in and support of local government, residents, business owners and other stakeholders to bring the recommendations to fruition.



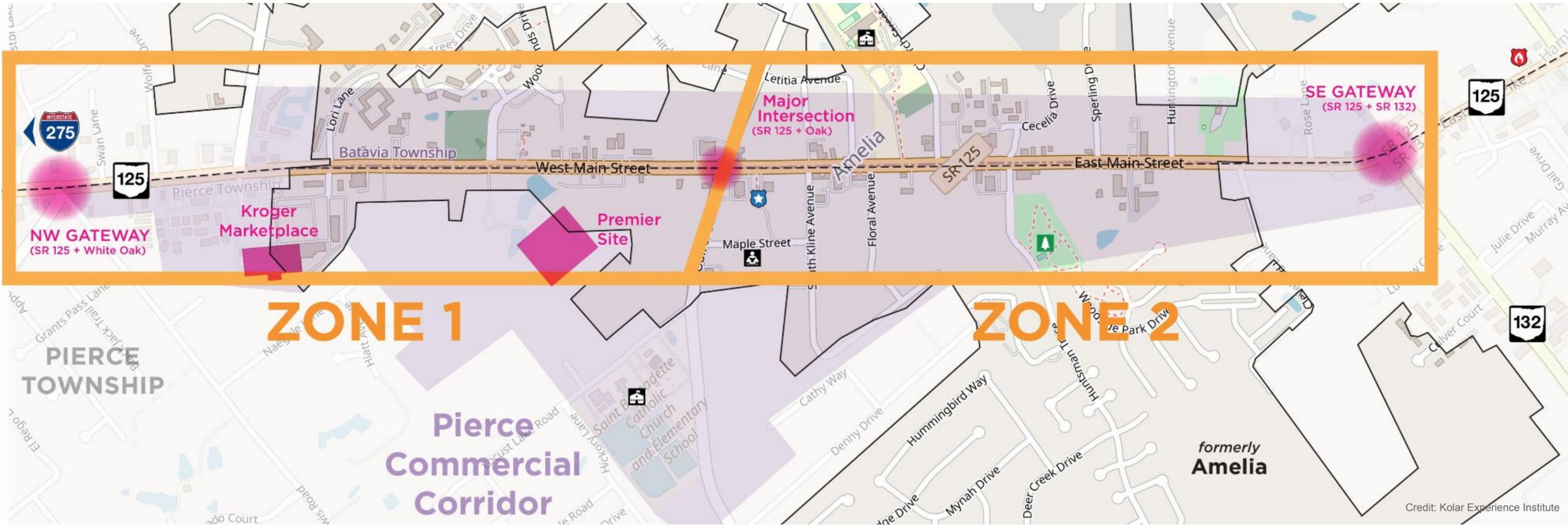
1.2 Project Team

Red Tiger Investments focuses on inspiring catalytic economic development through planning, real estate, public-private partnerships and collaboration. We imagine and create strategies that are catalyst for economic prosperity. Our philosophy is to understand the community through city staff, active stakeholders, citizens, professionals, experts and market participants.

KEI™ is a research and insight institute that uses data analytics, research and co-creation to drive business results.

We provide place-based strategies to shape the future of the brand experience.





1.3 Study Area

The study area for the **COVID-19 Impact Framework Plan** begins at White Oak Road traveling east along SR 125 inclusive of the St. Bernadette Church and Cole Road to the south. Generally the study area encompasses the portion of SR-125 that was part of the Village of Amelia’s jurisdiction (the “Corridor”).

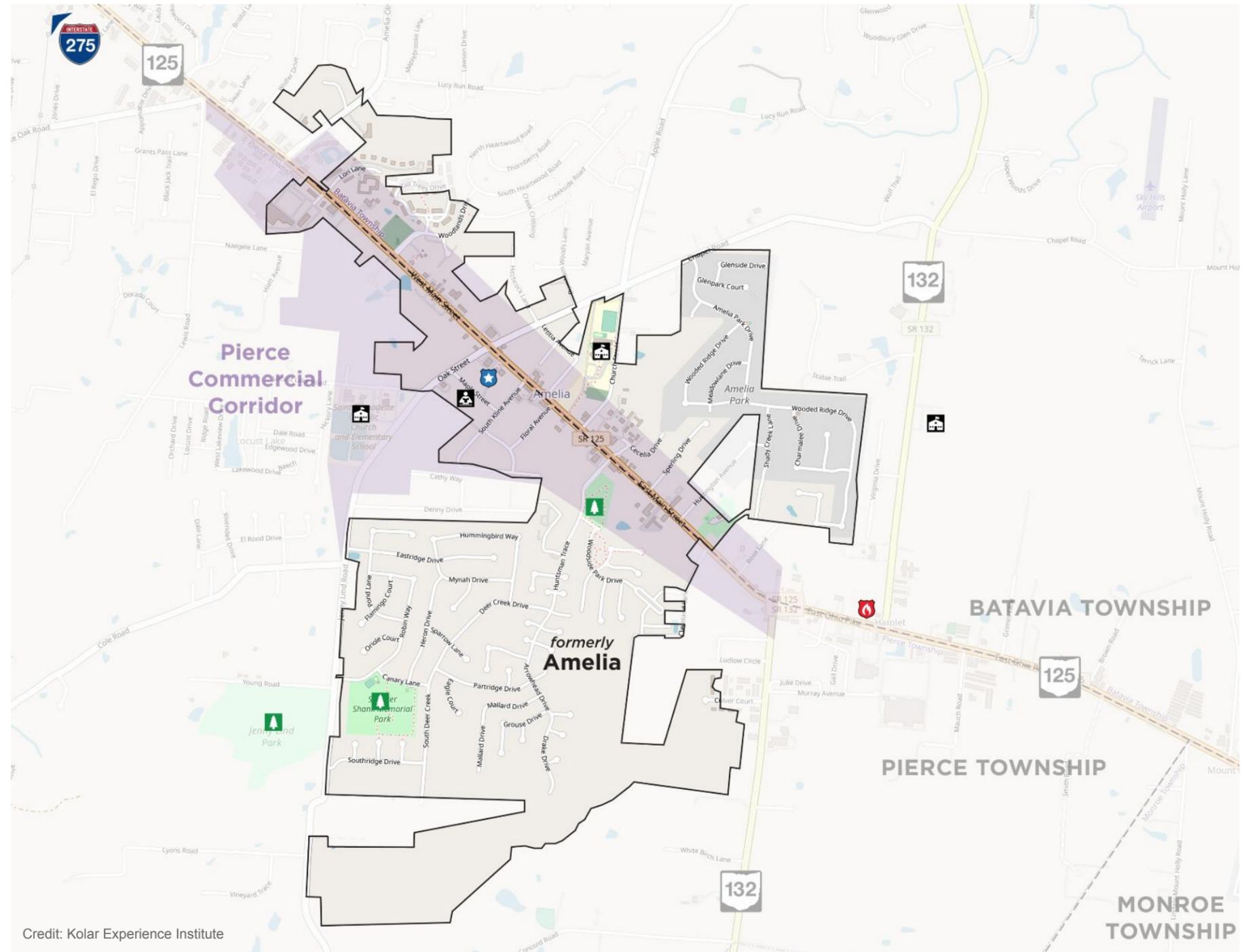
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Corridor Accessibility

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1.4 Objectives & Goals

- Understand and address COVID-19 impact on businesses along the Corridor
- Inform the size and structure of future policies to drive economic recovery
- Understanding the Corridor's present and future uses, improvements, and development
- Serve as a catalyst for future funding and implementation by the township in the coming fiscal years to drive economic recovery



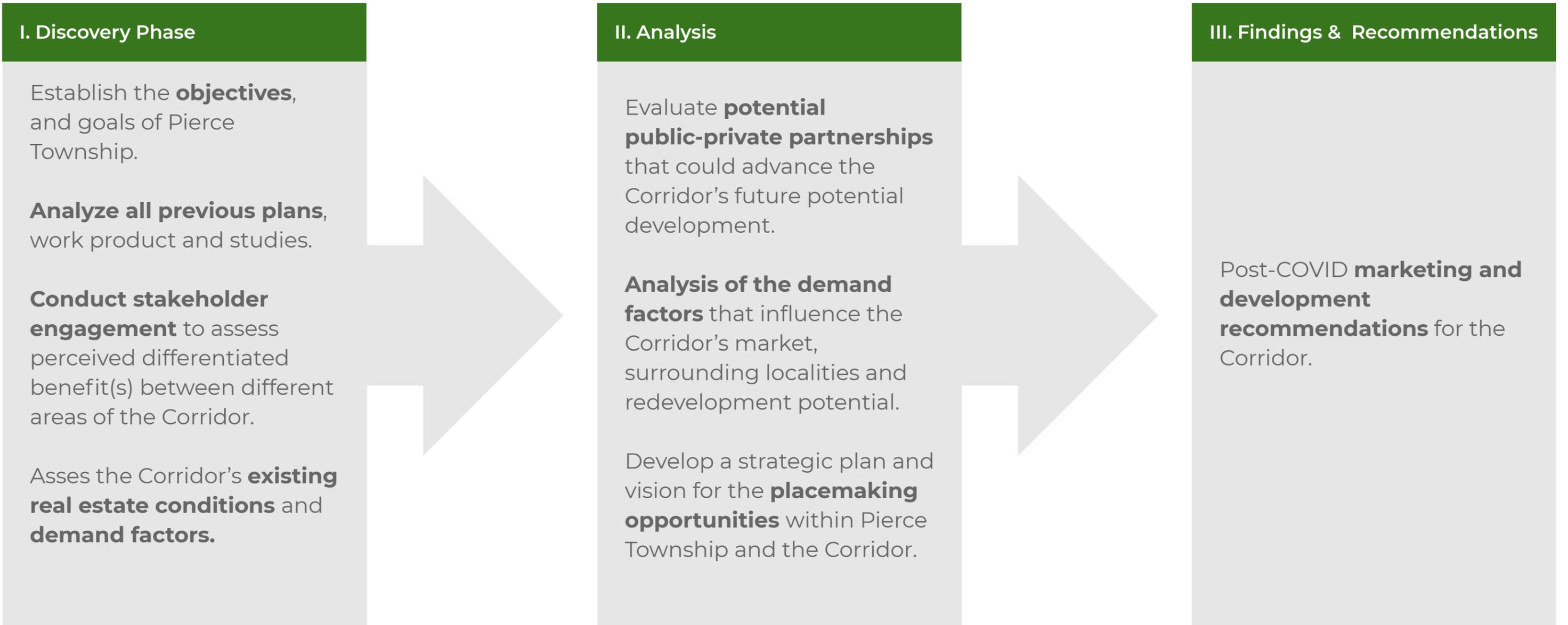
Credit: Adobe Stock



Credit: Adobe Stock



1.3 Our Process



02

Discovery

- 2.1 Existing Work Product Analysis
- 2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis
- 2.3 Market Research & Analysis
- 2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery



Credit: Adobe Stock

2.1 Existing Work Product Analysis

Gathered, organized and assimilated were all relevant previous plans, work product and studies to synthesize a Post-COVID Framework Plan. This Plan along with previous studies are the initial fundamental steps required for pandemic recovery and current and future positive transformation of the Corridor. Analyzed were the following:

- Village of Amelia Comprehensive Plan (May 2000)
- Pierce Township Land Use Plan (Nov. 2013)
- Pierce Township Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (Sep. 2016)
- SR 125 Corridor Study (Sep. 2020)
- 2020 Amelia Community Survey (Nov. 2020)



2.1 Existing Work Product Analysis

Village of Amelia Comprehensive Plan (May 2000)

Prior to its comprehensive plan in 2000, Amelia never had a strategy to guide its growth and development, which was quickly consuming its undeveloped land. Continuous traffic congestion was affecting the community's quality of life and economic viability. The comprehensive plan contained the goals, policies, vision and plan for its future growth and development. A major focus of the plan was Amelia's business district along Main Street (i.e., SR-125).

Target Area Applicable Findings

Piecemeal Development

Historical ad-hoc pattern of growth and development along Main Street

Appearance

Quality, appearance, and vitality of commercial development are low and need substantial improvements

Visual character is unattractive due to lack of maintenance to buildings, grounds, parking lots and deteriorating signage

Business Types

Most are marginal and do not serve everyday community needs

Most residents only go to Main Street to visit the bank, drug store or post office

Overwhelming majority of residents shop outside of Amelia (e.g., Eastgate and Beechmont)

Identify and set aside land areas suitable for light industrial development

Encourage the development of business and commercial uses which complement and serve the needs of local residents and adjacent areas

Traffic Flow

The impact of traffic from Main Street is the single most important issue that Amelia must address to become a viable community to attract people and jobs

Main Street traffic causes an unsafe walking environment

Connectivity

Connectivity and access through interconnected transportation system was not considered in the planning and growth of Amelia

Residents must drive to Main Street to accomplish any local daily necessity

Village Center

Lack of a focal area in the Village with mixed uses, gathering place and to act as a major destination (i.e., town center, town square)

Identified the Pommert property as the optimal opportunity for a Village Center, because of location, character and single owner of a large tract of land

Business & Economic Development

Develop and promote opportunities for business development and expansion

Recommendations

Traffic & Circulation System

Establish an efficient, safe and balanced traffic and circulation system for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and improve access to businesses and employment places

Bikeway Path

Develop and implement a bikeway plan for safe bicycle access to Main Street

Parking

Increase parking opportunities through the provision of coordinated parking areas

Visual Character

Improve visual character of the corridor (e.g., signs, building appearance, image and character)

Public Private Partnership

Foster a public/private development partnership responsive to economic needs of business and residents

Business Association

Establish the organizational structure for continued economic development and business retention and recruitment

Technical & Financial Assistance

Provide technical assistance and financial incentives in order to retain existing businesses and attract new ones

Light Industrial Development

Identify and set aside land areas suitable for light industrial development

Village Center

Establish a Village center, where civic, commercial, office and residential uses are integrated with public spaces and amenities to create a focus for the community



2.1 Existing Work Product Analysis

Pierce Township Land Use Plan Update (November 2013)

Pierce Township adopted zoning in 1961 and updated those regulations in 2010 to maintain a modernized set of land use regulations that suit the township’s needs.

The plan is to act as a land use blueprint directing Pierce Township officials to attain economic stability and continue peaceful enjoyment for its citizens. Although the plan does not change zoning, or how someone may legally use their land, it points the way for changes judged necessary to meet conditions of the foreseeable future. The intent of this plan is answering the pertinent question of “How do we want to develop over the next 5 years?”

Target Area Applicable Findings

CIC Formation

Pierce Township will investigate the creation of a Community Improvement Corporation to maximize the use of nonresidential land to expand the tax base of the Township.

Natural Environment

The natural environment and other favorable existing conditions of Pierce Township will be improved and protected.

Collaboration with Clermont Co.

The township will work with county and regional agencies that control and manage infrastructure and services to provide safe and efficient services to its residents with the understanding that infrastructure, such as sanitary sewer and water, are not under the township’s authority to control.

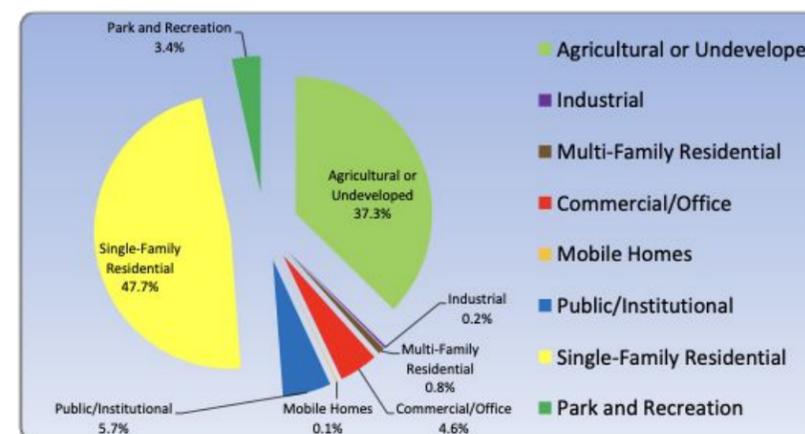
Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Business District provided for in the Revised Zoning Regulation adopted in 2010 provide for small commercial development adjacent to Residential Zones. Development in these areas should maintain a height and scale similar to nearby residential uses so as to blend in better with those nearby developments.

Industrial

Promote economic development by concentrating commercial and industrial properties in particular areas of the township.

Existing Land Use Pie Chart



2.1 Existing Work Product Analysis

Pierce Township Comprehensive Economic Plan (Sep. 2016)

The Comprehensive Plan provides a list of action items to be worked on in order for Pierce Township to truly achieve its end economic goals for its future. The plan should be viewed as a work in progress.

Target Area Applicable Findings

Commercial Land Use

Pierce Township has not developed in a way that has created significant commercial land uses. The Township has less than 5% of its current land in commercial usage. Much of that is underutilized and along SR 125 or near OH-132. Generally, a rate less than 10% is found in communities with very high property taxes or have one or two large businesses that kick in significantly from payroll taxes. Moving the percentage above 5% is critical to the future of Pierce Township.

Identified Three Key Methods to Increase Commercial Use

- Create **SR-125 Redevelopment Plan** which includes improving this corridor both functionally and aesthetically
- Create **Regional Partnerships** with the townships of Union and Batavia and the Village of Amelia, Clermont County CIC, Clermont Port Authority and Clermont County TID to pursue mutually beneficial opportunities
- Create a **Marketing Plan** as a proactive outreach tool to attract potential business/investors

Identified Three Distinct SR-125 Commercial Nodes

1. Entertainment District: State Route 125 from Merwin 10 Mile to Pierce Point
2. Retail District: State Route 125 from Pierce Point to East Boundary of Amelia
3. Commercial & Office District: State Route 125 from East Boundary of Amelia Through Hamlet to Eastern Township Boundary

Pommert Property

The Pommert Property along SR-125 adjacent to Kroger is sitting in an area that is ideal for commercial use and/or multi-family. By being proactive on this site, the Township can work together to develop a plan that will achieve the highest and best use for that land.



Credit: 2016 Pierce Township Comprehensive Economic Plan | Provided by Pierce Township



2.1 Existing Work Product Analysis

2020 Amelia Community Survey (Nov. 06, 2020)

In November 2019, the residents of the former Amelia Village voted to dissolve their Village. As a result, the Zoning framework in place dissolved as well. As a result, the Board of Trustees undertook an effort to study and further build upon existing and evolving plans/events in the Amelia Neighborhood. As such, the Township crafted the 2020 Community Survey focused on Amelia with the intent of helping to gain focus for: 1) scope of the Amelia study; 2) provide residents a new outlet to communicate, outside of traditional formats; and 3) obtain key information from the community regarding issues and focus areas for improvement/points of strength.

Target Area Applicable Findings

Assuming a population of 18,000 in the Township (rough approx. 2018) and a margin of error of 7% with a confidence interval of 95%, the survey sample size of 194 qualified as statistically significant. The following is a summary of the opinion the respondents collectively felt strongest about:

Walkability & Design

- Improved walkability and overall design (community character)

Mixed-Use

- More mixed use in the downtown

Community Gathering and Events Space

- Pavilion
- Community gathering and events space

Farmers Market and Casual Dining

- Farmer's Market
- Casual restaurant(s)
- Formal sit-down restaurants

Retail and Parks

- Ice cream shop
- Event space
- Coffee shop
- More retail
- Parks

Township Investment

Suggestions

- Storefront improvements
- Street improvements received
- Road improvements
- Sidewalk improvements
- Business attraction/retention



2.1 Existing Work Product Analysis

SR 125 Corridor Study (Sep. 2020)

Initiated by the Pierce Township Board of Trustees to serve as the planning framework for the re-development and transformation of the corridor. The study identifies specific nodes that may have re-development potential for focusing efforts and future investment dollars, thereby increasing density and dollars. The study consist of two primary components: (i) a traffic and infrastructure analysis; and (ii) land use & zoning recommendations. *The study did not cover the Amelia portion of the Corridor.*

Target Area Applicable Findings

Economic Development Plan

In order to achieve the vision of the SR-125 corridor, a solid and realistic economic development plan should be adopted and implemented. This requires a multi-pronged approach to creating the framework and incentivized development environment sufficient to attract developer and stand-alone end user interest.

SR-125 Economic Development Recommended Tools

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)
- Incentivized Zoning
- Strategic Land Acquisitions
- Proactive Infrastructure Upgrades



Credit: 2020 State Route 125 Corridor Study | Provided by Pierce Township



2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

COVID Impact Study

2020

Sensing topics:

- ❖ COVID Impact on Businesses
- ❖ COVID Impact on Landlords
- ❖ Brand Story and Asset Assessment

Participants: 88 responses

- ❖ Potential Business Owners: 1
 - ❖ Landlords: 1
 - ❖ Business Owners: 11
 - ❖ Stakeholders: 72
-
- ❖ Visitors: 51
 - ❖ Residents: 29

Amelia Community Survey

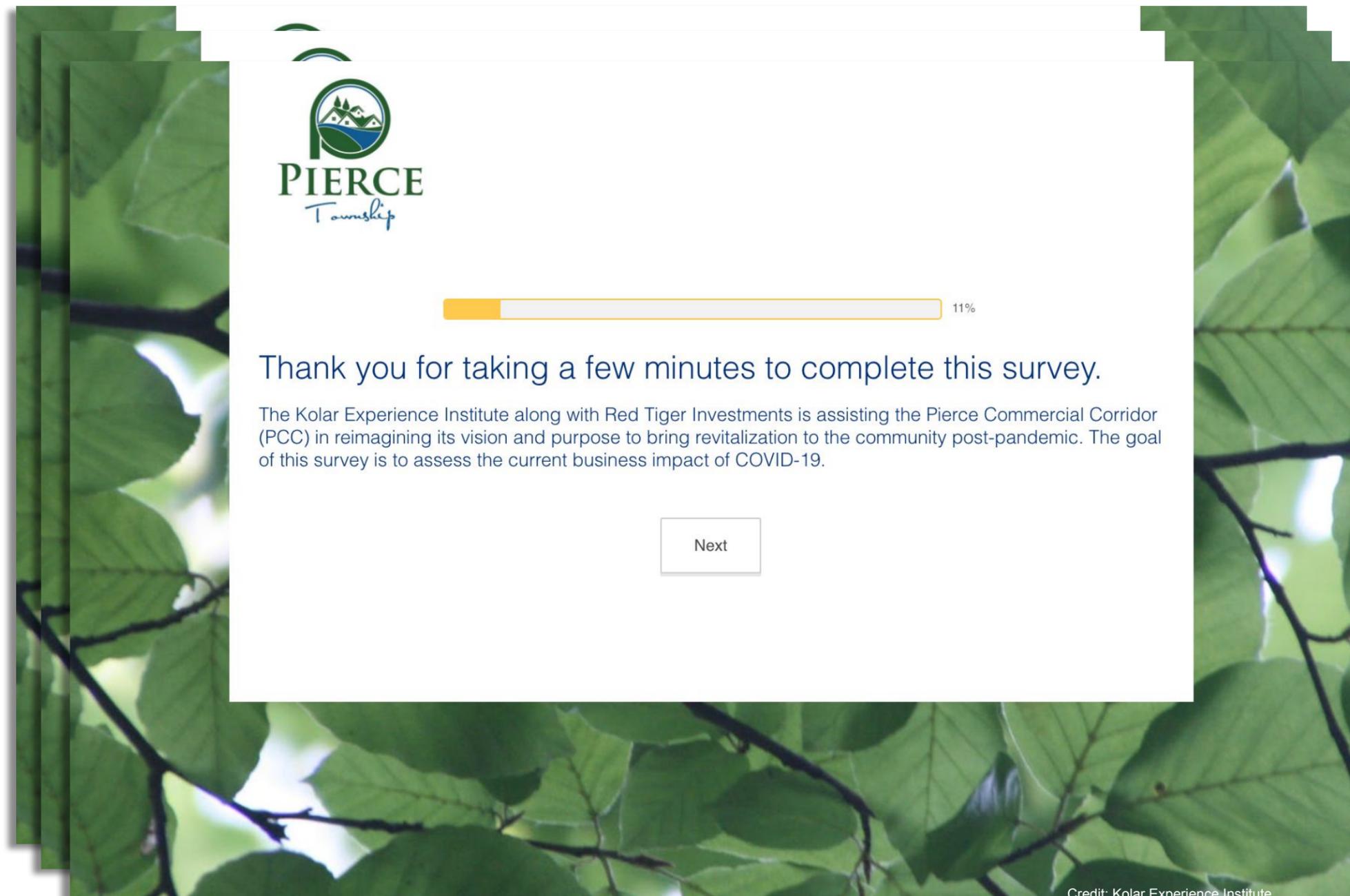
2020

Sensing topics:

- ❖ Perceptions of Twp/Village
- ❖ Community desires

Participants: 226 responses

- ❖ Residents: 224
- ❖ Businesses: 2



Credit: Kolar Experience Institute

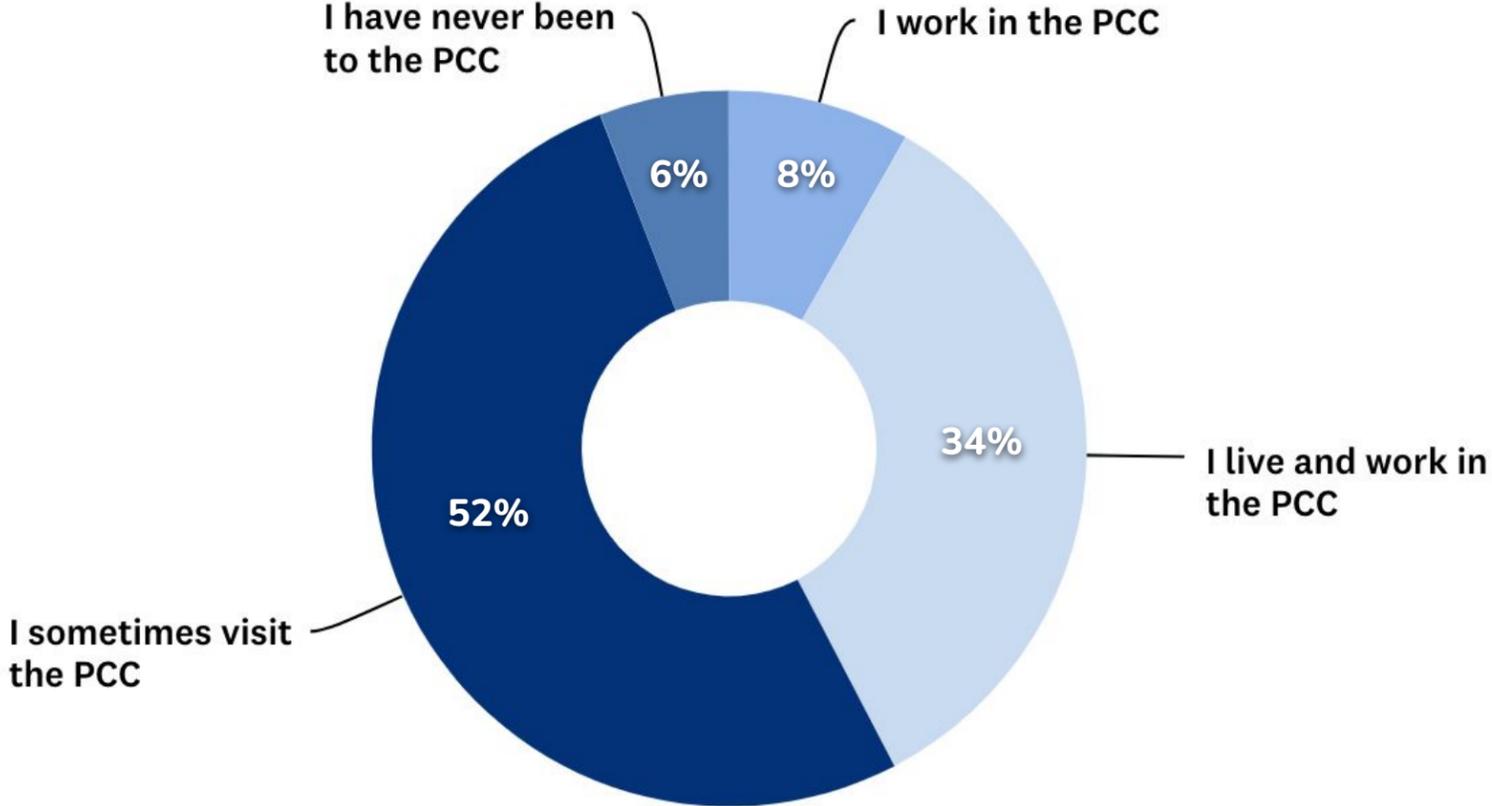
2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

2020 Participant Demographics

Affiliation Demographics

- 88 respondents
- 5 Unqualified (never been to the commercial corridor)

FIG 2.2-1 Relationship to the Corridor



Note: Sample data may be skewed due to the volume of participants that identified in the ways documented above.

2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

2020 Participant Demographics

Business Demographics

- 11 respondents:
 - 17% Cooperatively-owned
 - 83% Locally-owned

**one landlord response, insufficient data for analysis*

FIG 2.2-2 Distribution of Business Type

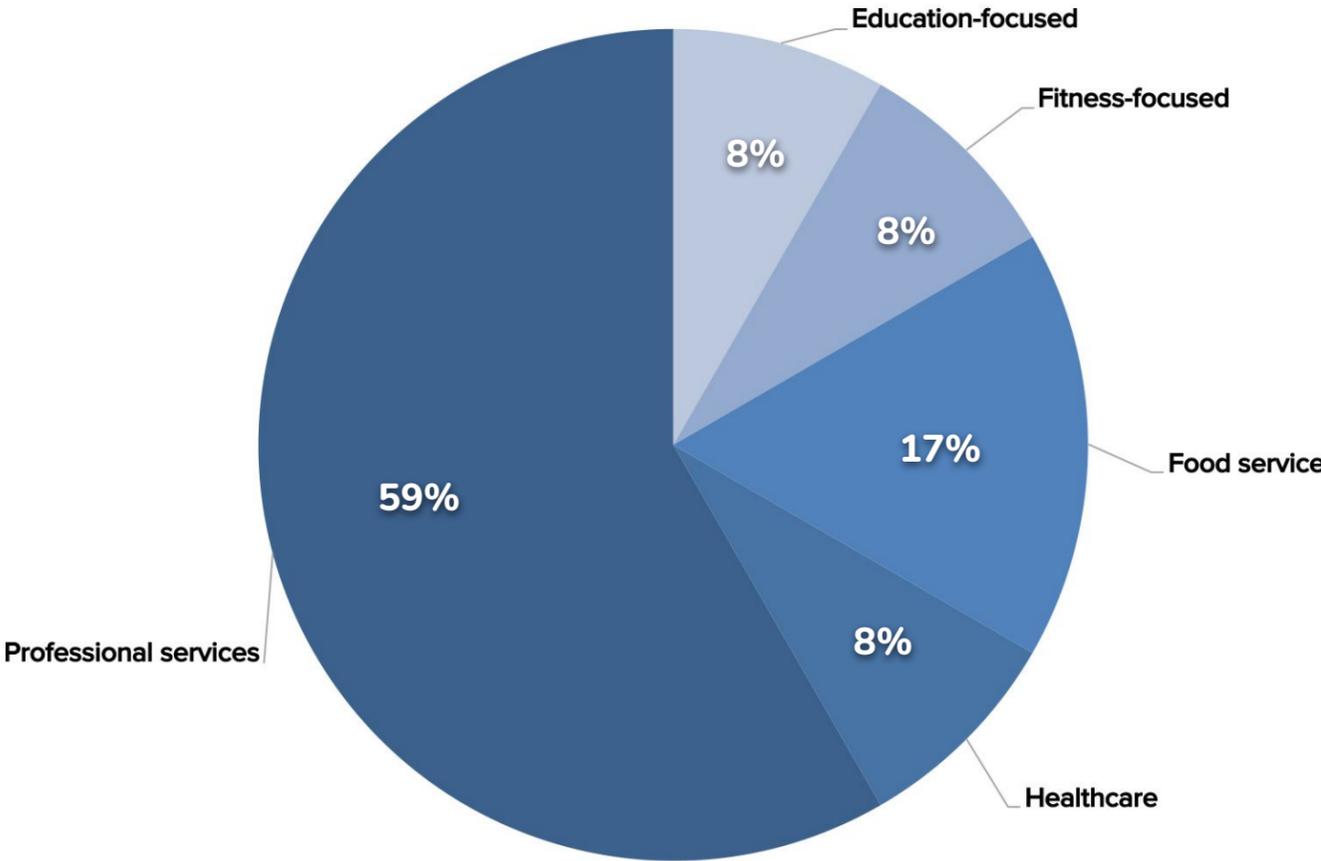
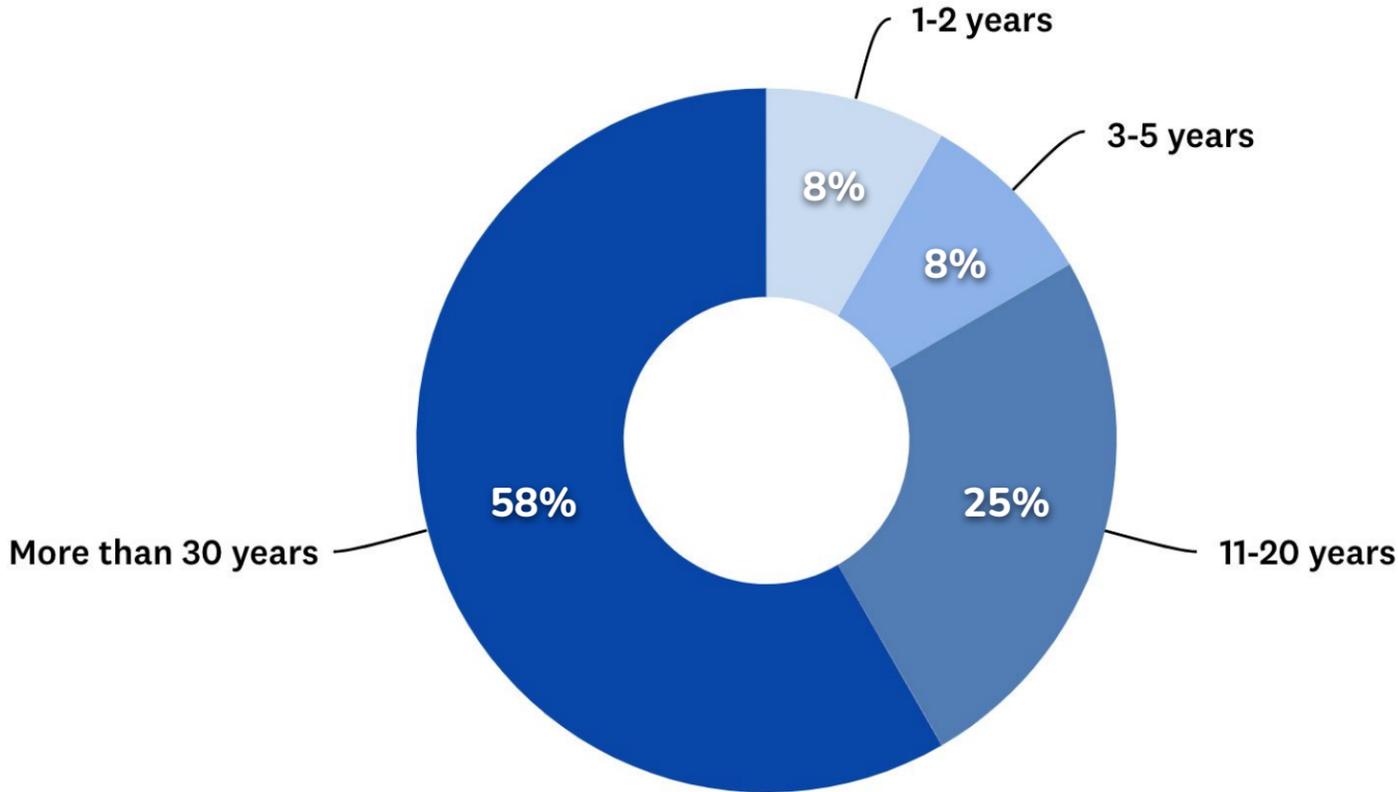


FIG 2.2-3 Years of Operation



Note: Sample data may be skewed due to the volume of participants that identified in the ways documented above.

2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

Business Runway

Businesses are experiencing a variety of repercussions from the pandemic.

Only 45% of businesses that participated in the survey reported a decrease in revenue. The majority of businesses shockingly reported a steady revenue or even an increase in revenue. Of those who did lose revenue, most stayed within the 25%-50% loss range (see Figure 2.1-4 for distribution of revenue loss).

There was no relationship evident (in this sample) between business size and revenue loss. However, 83% of professional service businesses reported stable or increased revenue in this sample.

Businesses that reported stable revenue or a revenue increase, were also likely to report a change or adaptation to their businesses model. They were also likely to report taking on additional operating expenses.

Furthermore, businesses who created an online sales component (8%) and those who had one prior (16%) to the pandemic either increased or sustained online sales.

In this sample, many businesses made adaptations to prepare or adapt to the economic downturn, which is likely a driver in their minimization of revenue loss.

FIG 2.2-4 Reported Revenue Loss (since March 2020)

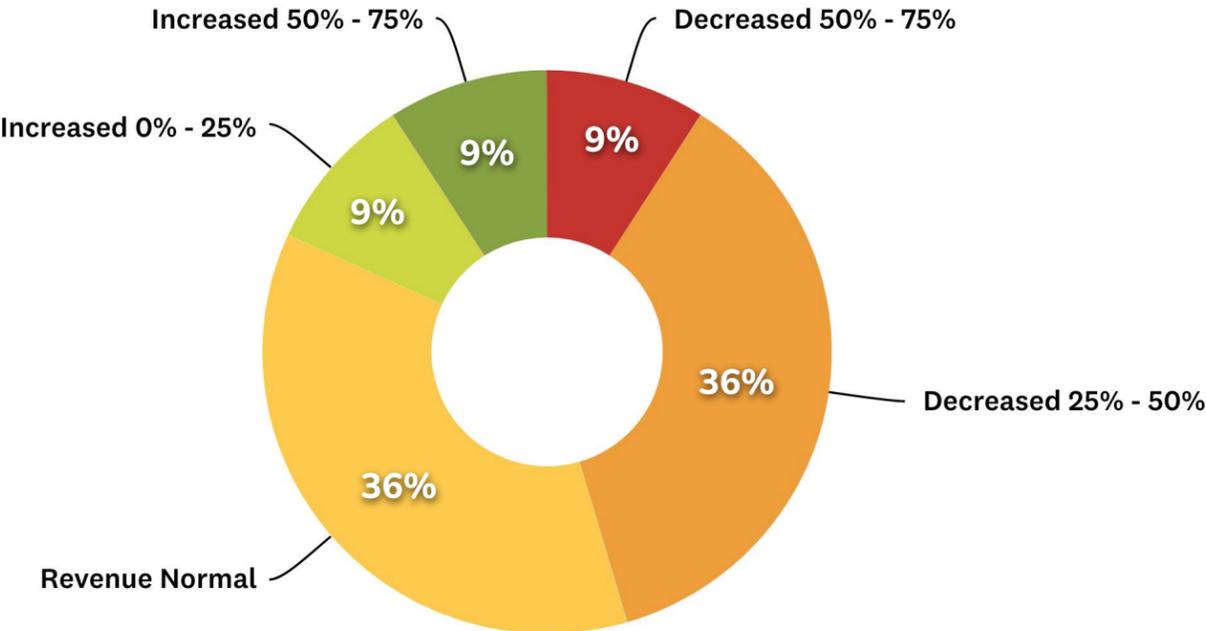
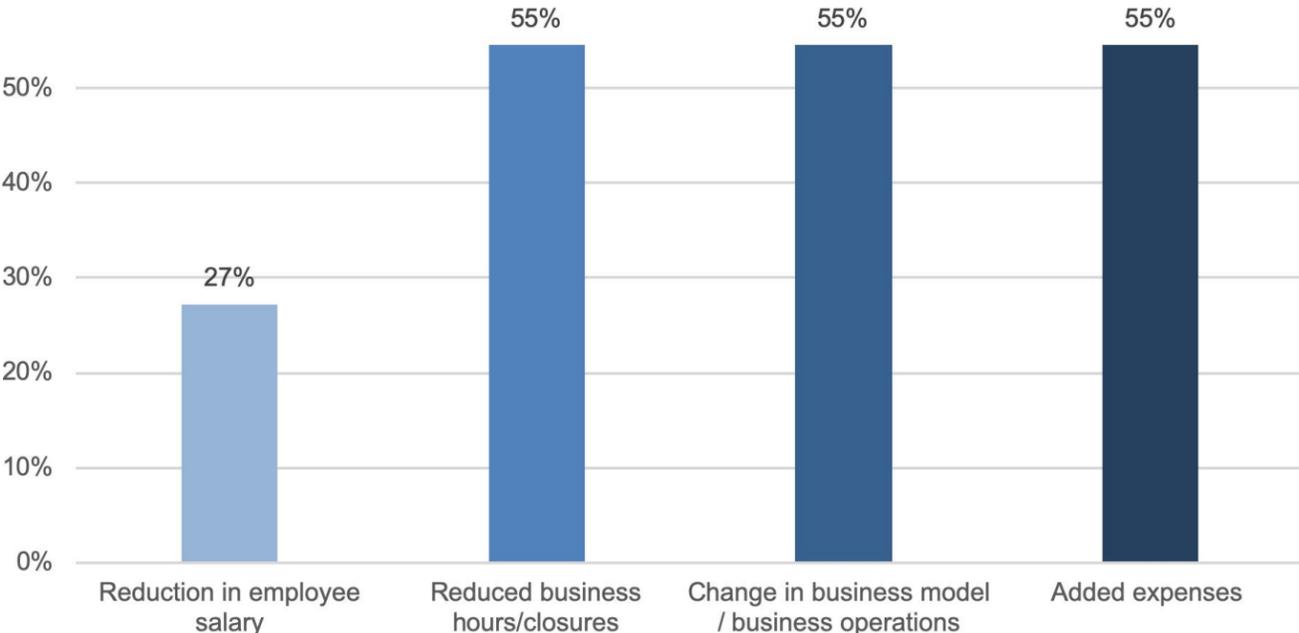


FIG 2.2-5 Pandemic-Induced Business Adjustments (since March 2020)



2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

Business Runway

Concern is concentrated in the public health emergency and business stability.

The most frequently reported concern among businesses in Pierce Township is protecting customers from COVID. A close second was the loss (or potential loss) of business due to either less projects/sales or decreased consumer confidence. However, many businesses do not fear closing permanently or significant layoffs.

Only 23% of businesses that responded to the survey experienced layoffs; this percentage is distributed across business sizes and types. No solopreneurs report closing their doors.

Of the businesses that experienced layoffs, at least 20% of staff were laid off. Additionally, 67% of those who have already laid off employees are also predicting further layoffs totaling to 40% of their staff or greater.

FIG 2.2-6 Which of the following are you concerned about as it relates to COVID Impact on your business?

Protecting customers from the coronavirus	64%
Lost revenue (i.e., clients, projects, sales)	45%
Decreased consumer confidence/ spending	45%
Protecting employees from the coronavirus	45%
Paying this month's rent/mortgage	27%
Accessing government support related to the public health emergency	27%
Making payroll this pay period and beyond	18%
Employee's financial welfare	18%
Losing employees	18%
Paying for inventory / supplies / expenses	18%
Getting inventory / supplies	18%

Intensity of red indicates how frequently the concern was reported

67%

of businesses in this sample are **not concerned** about closing permanently.



1/2

of businesses **concerned about closing permanently**, have been in operation less than 5 years.

2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

Business District Success Criteria

There is alignment on what is important for success but lack of a clear and strong civic identity to drive the desired success.

Business owners perceive cleanliness and maintenance of the corridor as the most important to the success of their individual business. This was also the most agreed upon success factor in addition to the highest scoring (i.e. most important).

It is important to note that each of the factors on average scored above a 3, meaning business owners feel that these factors are all somewhat important.

“Family Oriented” and “Neighborly” appear in the top three identity values across visitors, residents and business owners. However, the top value has a bit of disconnect. Residents and business owners on average agree that Pierce should strive to be entertaining, while visitors feel that Pierce should be family-oriented.

Compared to data from the 2020 Amelia survey, the township has a gap as it is currently seen as “rundown, rural and quaint”-- with little to no mention of “family-oriented” or “entertaining.” However, in the 2020 Amelia survey, there was a notable mention of the township as friendly/neighborly, which is an important foundational value to pull forward in a revitalized Pierce Township as indicated by COVID relief data.

FIG 2.2-7 How important are the following for the success of your business?
(1= Not Important, 5 = Extremely Important)

	Score (1-5)	Variance
Cleanliness / maintenance of the corridor	4.30	25%
Shared vision for the corridor	4.10	29%
Perceived safety of customers and employees	4.09	28%
Ease and affordability of parking/transport	4.00	33%
Marketing of general corridor	3.90	25%
High visibility of my storefront from the road	3.78	43%
Other nearby businesses my cusomters visit	3.67	41%
High foot traffic near my location	3.33	54%

Green = most important, Red = least important

Blue Highlight= High Consensus, Gray Highlight = Low Consensus

FIG 2.2-8 Future Civic Identity Descriptors
(1 = Pierce should strive to be, 8 = Pierce should *not* strive to be)

Adjective	Visitors	Residents	Business Owners
Family Oriented	1	2	3
Neighborly	2	3	2
Convenient	3	4	5
Entertaining	4	1	1
Inclusive	5	7	6
Beautiful	6	5	4
Charming	7	6	7
Eclectic	8	8	8

2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

Strengths / Delivery

Pierce has great schools, location and safety which drives up residential demand; however, commercially, it is perceived as “rundown” due to lack of critical components of vibrancy along the business corridor.

As expressed in stakeholder interviews and survey responses, Pierce is a hotspot for residential living as it has the typical assets young, new families often look for when buying a home. As shown in FIG 2.2-9, Pierce’s overall scores are relatively high (especially for business owners). Respondents on average had high levels of consensus across all aspects measured with the highest being affordability followed by schools and safety.

Nevertheless, Pierce lacks the appearance of vibrancy due to the lack of a thriving business mix to support residential clientele in addition to a poor representation of its character/charm at critical impression points.

A placemaking “facelift” could go a long way in improving impressions of the township and recruiting more visitors and businesses to the area. This was also verified by 2020 Amelia Survey data in which storefront, street, and sidewalk improvements were the top 3 desired investment areas for the Township. However, attention must be paid to finding and stabilizing the right business mix in the area while also streamlining the process, communication, and assistance in opening businesses in the area. These areas show the need for improvement and could explain the neutral scores in Figure 2.2-10.

FIG 2.2-9 How Well Does Pierce Support or Deliver on the Following Attributes? (scale 1-5)

Community Aspect	Stakeholders	Business Owners	Variance
Safety / Lack of Crime	3.82	4.00	22%
Schools	3.80	4.38	22%
Ease of Access to Other Areas of Cincinnati	3.52	4.11	30%
Affordability	3.52	4.13	20%
Parks / Greenspace	3.32	4.00	32%
Ease of Opening a Business	3.22	3.33	27%
Ease of Transportation & Parking	3.12	4.00	29%
Sense of Community	2.65	3.78	42%
Events / Things to do	2.62	3.89	45%
Appearance of Area / Character	2.41	3.78	45%
Selection of Food / Dining	2.32	3.11	45%
Walkability	2.23	3.78	46%

FIG 2.2-10 How Well Does Pierce Support or Deliver on the Following Attributes?

	Score (1-5)	Sample Variance
The Pierce Commercial Corridor is a great place to do business	3.21	29%
I recommend the Pierce Commercial Corridor as a place to visit	3.14	34%

Compared to 2020 Amelia Survey data, Figure 2.2-10 stats have stayed relatively consistent.

2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

Pierce Commercial Corridor Business Synergies

Some businesses are open to exploring synergistic relationships in the corridor.

While businesses seem to be open to synergy and innovative business models, there were not any specific ideas expressed. Businesses would likely benefit from a business association to support them in these efforts as they seem more focused on surviving the economic downturn rather than making the necessary adjustments for a successful long-term future.

The establishment of a business association within Pierce could help integrate former Amelia businesses into the community while helping to create access to a network of mutualism amongst the Township.



Credit: Sebastiaan ter Burg

“

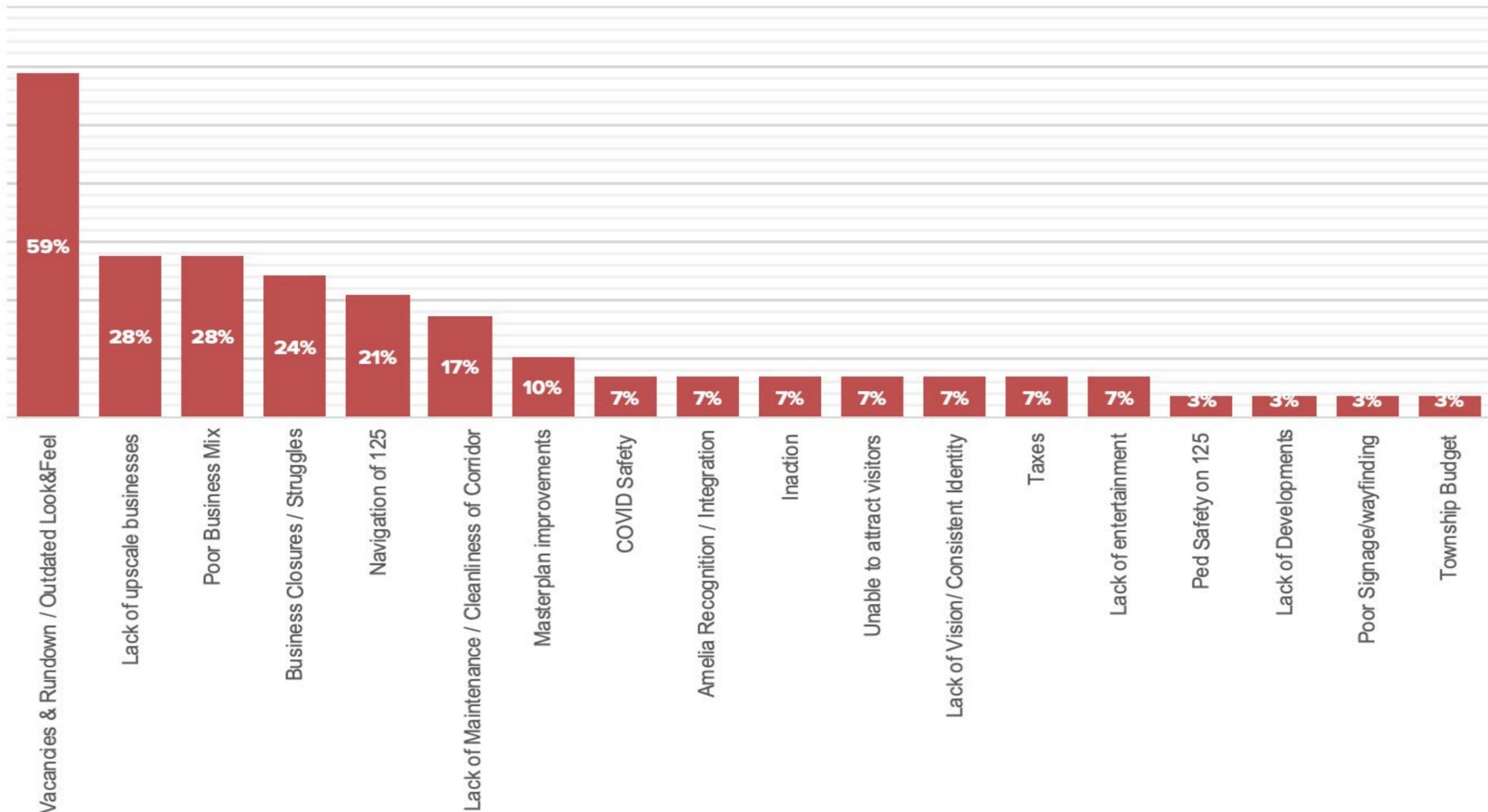
[We need] networking opportunities to meet other business owners within the corridor (even if virtual)

”

2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

Pierce Commercial Corridor: Concerns

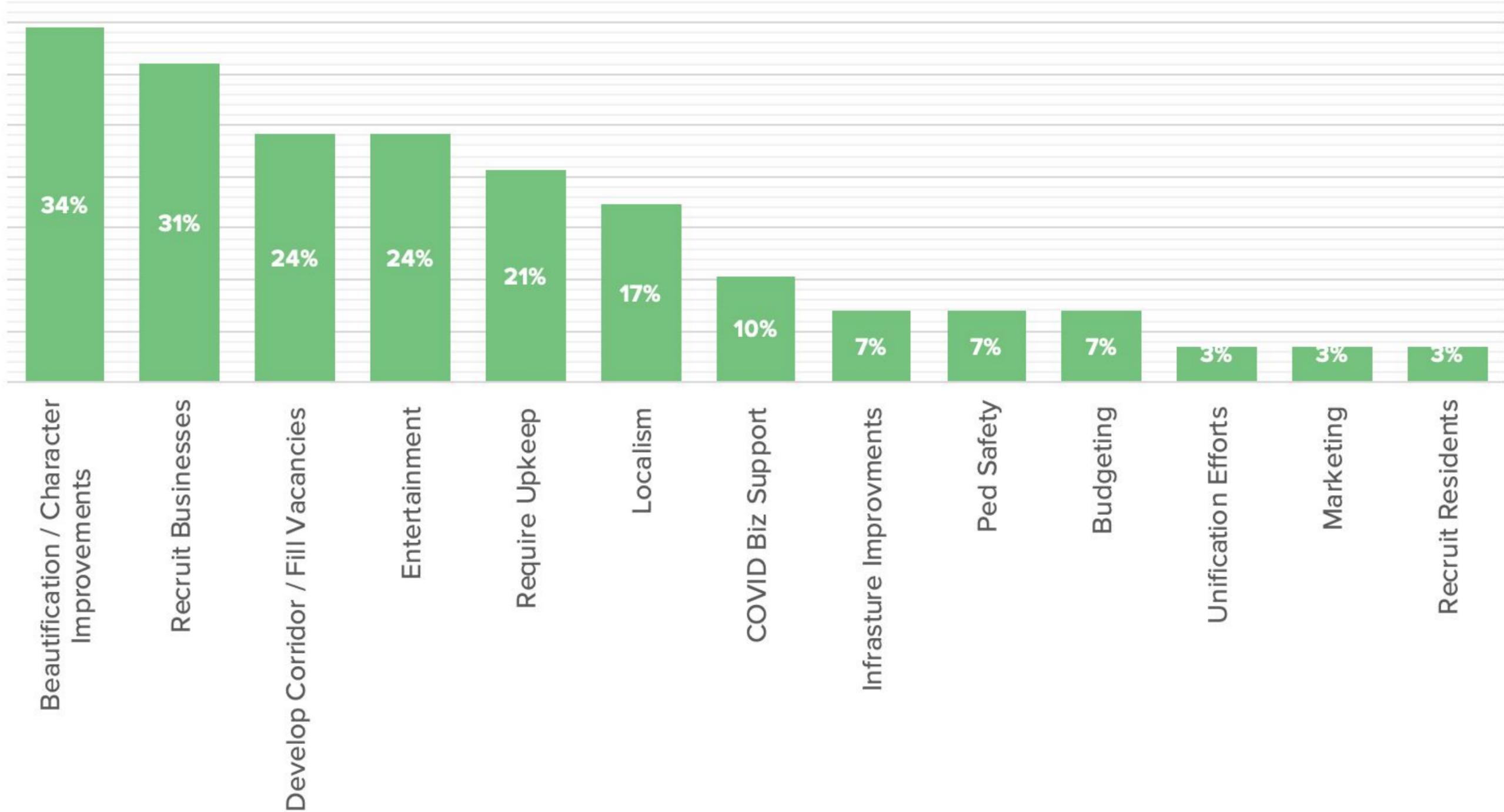
FIG 2.2-11 What is your Primary Concern for the Township? (frequency of theme)



2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

Pierce Commercial Corridor: Opportunity

FIG 2.2-12 What priorities would you recommend for the PCC to realize its greatest potential? (frequency of theme)



2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

Concern and Opportunity Analysis

Even with the impact of COVID, Pierce still feels its greatest challenges are focused around improving its appearance.

Compared to 2020 Amelia Survey data, the Township still most frequently mentioned overall appearance of the area as their greatest concern. COVID was only mentioned in 7% of comments regarding greatest concerns and 10% of comments regarding opportunities to prioritize.

However, it is important to note that businesses are concerned about COVID safety precautions, declines in revenue and other COVID-related issues as shown previously in [Figure 2.2-6](#).

“
[Pierce] lacks character and has few green spaces. In short, it's boring.
”
2020 Amelia Survey

“
I would like to see businesses held to professional, attractive, clean, exteriors. Businesses that provide services for all members of our community. Especially with families and senior citizens in mind.
”
2020 COVID Impact Survey

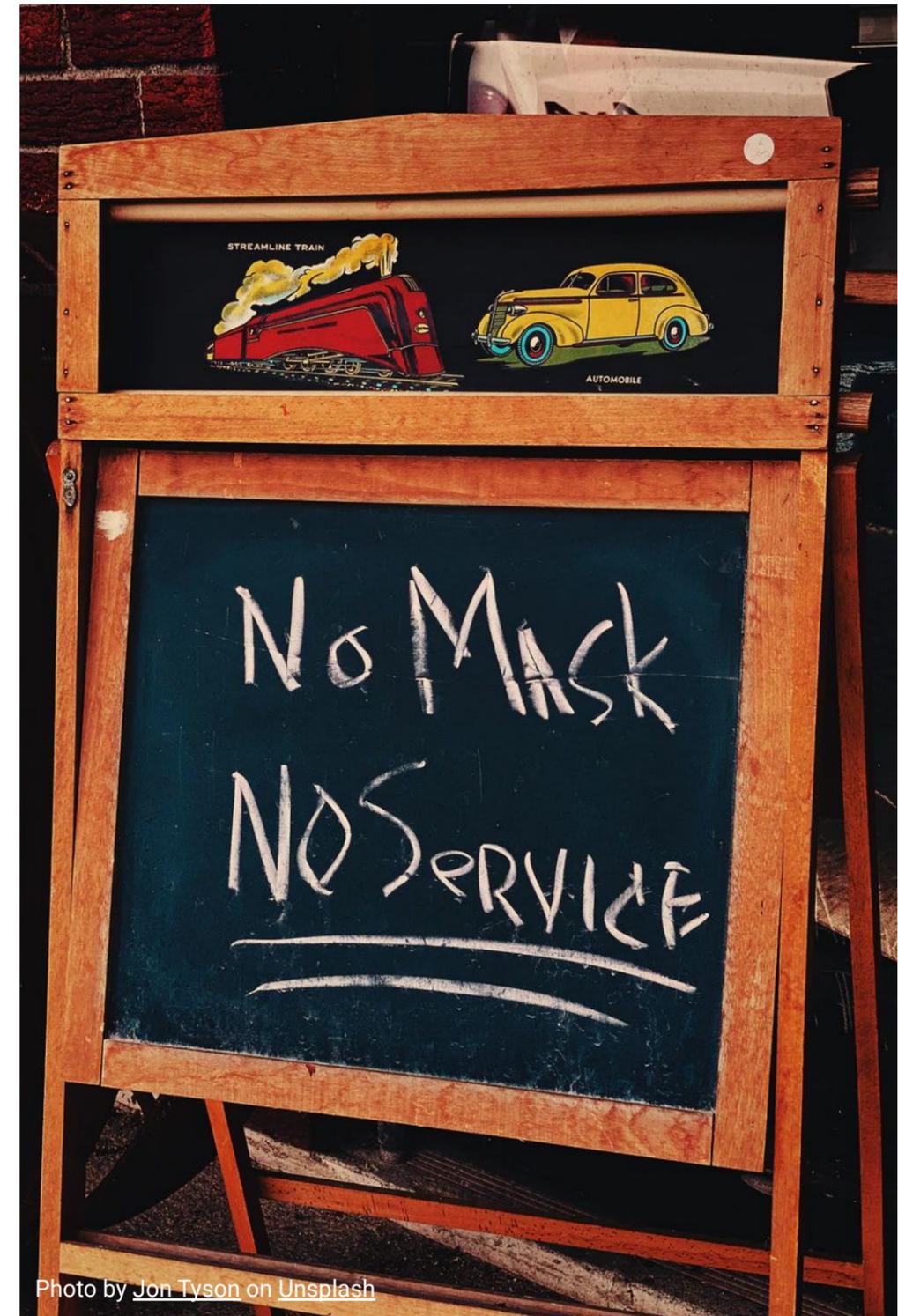


Photo by Jon Tyson on Unsplash

2.2 COVID-19 Impact Discovery & Survey Analysis

Concern and Opportunity Analysis

Challenges and Opportunities themes mirror each other. There is a desire to focus on developing the look & feel of Pierce to be more upscale and entertaining.

As Figures 2.2-11 and 2.2-12 show, the most frequent concept brought up in both “challenges” and “opportunities” was the lack of beautification and amount of underdeveloped / vacant properties in Pierce. Notably, 72% of all comments regarding “opportunities” focused on this, making it the most highly prioritized in this sample.

Further, the need for variety of more upscale businesses also appeared frequently as an opportunity (56%) and many remarked it was necessary for revitalization of the corridor.

In terms of short term, quick wins, Pierce should look into creating a sense of place, through storytelling. This, paired with increasing walkability, will help recruit more entertaining and upscale businesses to the corridor while increasing foot traffic.



Credit: Utile Architecture & Planning

“

Painting, landscaping and appearance of the area [is a priority]. Improvements would attract more businesses and make people proud to live here. Especially the places on 125!

”

“

Draw [in] better businesses [and] restaurants. Do something positive with the remains of the Premier project, [and] [re]evaluate the Amelia speed trap

”



2.3 Market Research & Analysis

The New Localism (May 13, 2020) - Bruce Katz & Jeremy Nowak

Focus: COVID-19 is wreaking havoc “on Main Street small businesses across the United States.” Of the millions of small business that have shuttered during the crisis, the “three hardest hit are Main Street enterprises living on the brink — restaurants, bars, coffee shops, barbershops, hair salons, auto repair shops, dry cleaners and others that provide face-to-face services. These entities, usually sole proprietorships or businesses with fewer than 20 or even 5 employees are running out of cash or already broke.”

Jeopardy: “If left unchecked, substantial vacancies and diminished commerce will precipitate a series of domino effects — on consumer confidence (given the central role that these places serve as hubs of community and civic life), on owners of commercial real estate (given the cessation or diminution of rent payments) and on tax revenues (given the disproportionate role that business districts play in local fiscal health).”

Proposed: “To that end, we propose that communities establish (and the federal government support) *Main Street Regenerators* to speed the revival of our business districts — downtowns, town centers, commercial corridors, university districts, classic Main Streets themselves — where community-serving enterprises congregate and co-locate.”

Main Street Regenerators: “Regenerators will build upon and bulk up existing intermediaries and institutions which already further the operations of these districts: merchant associations, business improvement districts, community development corporations, entrepreneurial incubators and accelerators and Main Street programs. Regenerators will also coordinate and connect with the wide variety of other organizations which are critical to small business success and the revival of nodes of commerce: city and town governments, anchor corporations, hospitals and universities, community development finance institutions, banks, small business relief funds, urban land

banks, philanthropies and other patient investors, redevelopment authorities, historic preservation societies, community colleges and skills providers, arts & culture associations, and many others.

Regenerator’s Five Key Functions:

First, Regenerators will help re-fill vacant buildings.

Second, Regenerators will coordinate the reconfiguration of the streetscape to align with the new possibilities and challenges of the COVID-19 crisis.

Third, Regenerators will provide common services for small businesses that are located along the same commercial corridor (or even throughout a mix of business districts).

Fourth, Regenerators can act as master tenants within business districts.

Finally, Regenerators can enhance access to capital for individual businesses and the district as a whole.

“

New Localism is the term we use to describe the shift in power that is taking place today from the Feds downward to metropolitan communities; horizontally across public, private, and civic networks; and globally along circuits of capital, talent, and innovation. For us, Localism does not refer only to local governments, but to the interplay of multiple sectors. Most importantly, we view New Localism as a problem-solving practice focused on the major challenges of our time, including growth, sustainability, and social integration.

- Jeremy Nowak, Drexel University’s Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation

”



2.3 Market Research & Analysis

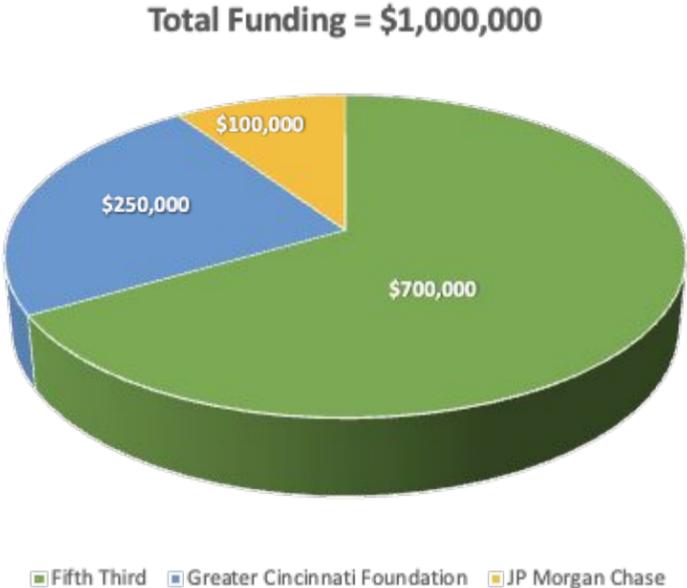
Cincinnati Business Courier: Fifth Third launches new initiative for COVID-impacted businesses (Dec. 14, 2020)

“Fifth Third Bank (Nasdaq: FITB) announced the launch of the Greater Cincinnati Covid-19 Small Business Response and Recovery Initiative to provide businesses with 25 or fewer employees in low-to moderate-income communities with advice and access to capital via loan and grant programs, according to a release. Emphasis will be given to companies with five or fewer employees.”

Small Businesses Negatively Impacted

Nearly 70,000 Hamilton County businesses with fewer than 25 employees will be negatively impacted as a result of the pandemic with more than 10,000 of those in low-to-moderate income communities.

Greater Cincinnati COVID-19 Small Business Response & Recovery Fund



Technical Assistance Providers to Participating Businesses

- ❑ Greater Cincinnati
- ❑ Northern Kentucky African American Chamber of Commerce
- ❑ Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber

Additional Business Services Providers

- ❑ Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio
- ❑ Greater Cincinnati Microenterprise Initiative

Initiative Referral Partners

- ❑ Hispanic Chamber Cincinnati USA
- ❑ HCDC Inc.

“
Small business owners open their doors every day, which allows their employees the opportunity to earn wages to take care of their families. Many of these employees live directly in the neighborhoods that those small businesses serve. This initiative makes resources available to those who take care of our communities.
 ”

- Mike Smith,
 Head of Business Banking
 for Fifth Third Cincinnati
 Region

2.3 Market Research & Analysis

The Impact of COVID-19 on Small Businesses: Findings from Main Street America's Small Business Survey

Main Street America conducted an online survey in late March to assess the impact of the COVID-19 on the approximately 300,000 small businesses across the network. Specifically, this survey was designed to help us understand small businesses' ability to what may be several months of suppressed revenue and what kinds of support programs will have the most impact. With thanks to our Main Street Network for encouraging participation in the survey, more than 5,850 small business owners responded.

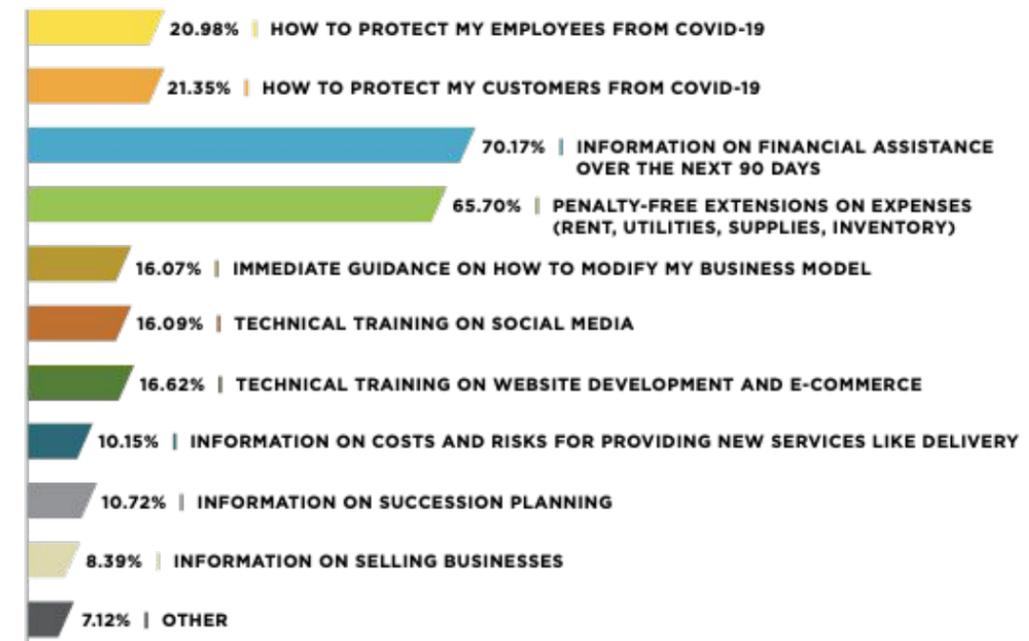


- 5,851 total surveys
- 48 states, and the District of Columbia
- 75% locally owned
- 50% woman owned
- 90% respondents had fewer than 20 employees
- 65.5% had fewer than 5 employees

FINDINGS

- The MSA survey indicates that millions of small businesses will be at great risk of closing permanently if the crisis continues for several months. Of the nation's approximately 30 million small businesses, nearly 7.5 million small businesses may be at risk of closing permanently over the coming five months, and 3.5 million are at risk of closure in the next two months.**
- COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on small businesses' revenue, and millions of Americans employed by our nation's smallest businesses are at risk of unemployment as a result. Approximately 35.7 million Americans employed by small businesses appear to be at risk of unemployment.**
- Our survey finds that business owners primarily need financial assistance and penalty-free extensions on expenses.**

Q. What types of assistance would be most helpful to your business?



Credit: The Impact of COVID-19 on Small Businesses: Findings from Main Street America's Small Business Survey Cover | https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NMSC/390e0055-2395-4d3b-af60-81b53974430d/UploadedImages/Resource_Center/COVID_19/NMSC57_MSA_COVID19IMAPCTSURVEY_F.pdf
 Data & Statistics | https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NMSC/390e0055-2395-4d3b-af60-81b53974430d/UploadedImages/Resource_Center/COVID_19/NMSC57_MSA_COVID19IMAPCTSURVEY_F.pdf

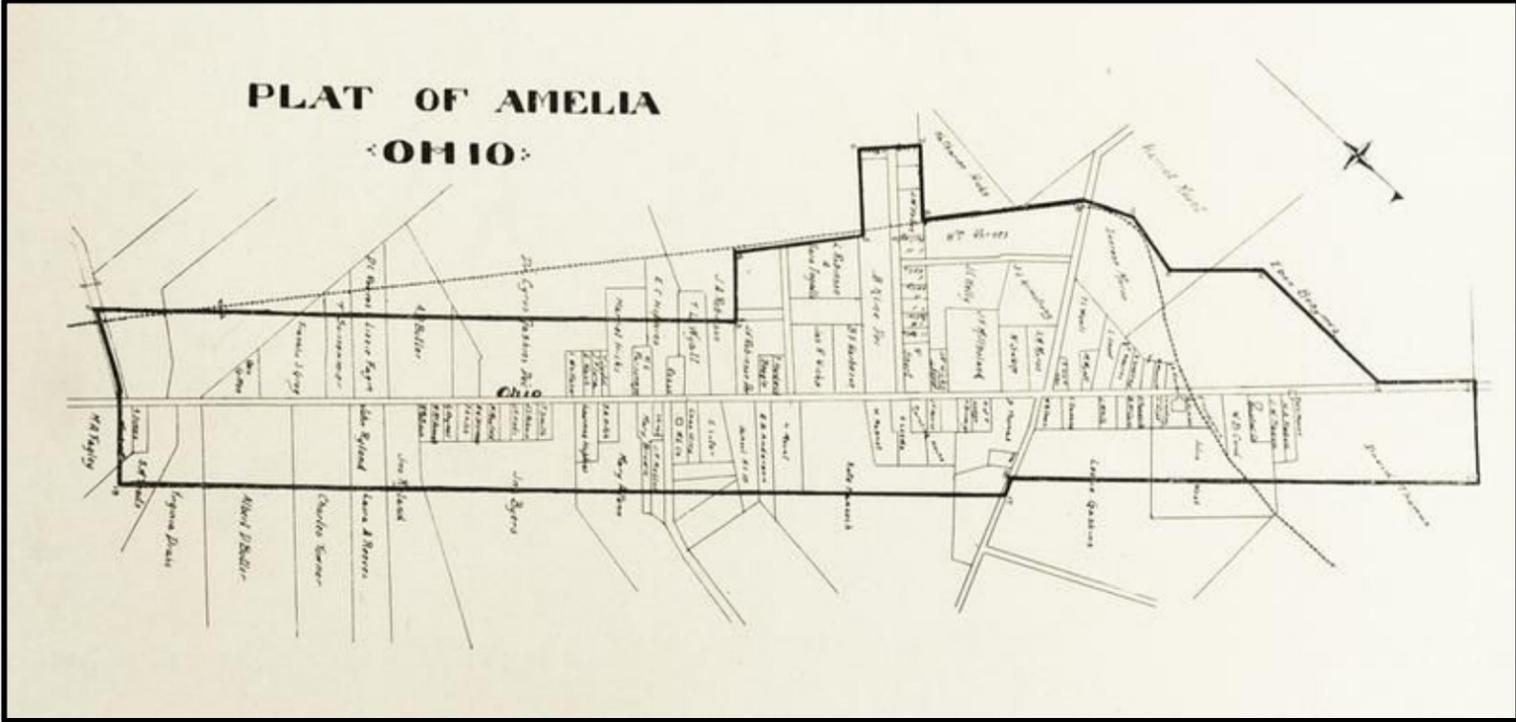
2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery

Historic Development and Construction

The Village of Amelia’s Comprehensive Plan (2000) states “the concept of planning for the future on a comprehensive and long-range basis is new to Amelia. Since its incorporation in 1900, the Village has grown with relatively little planning direction.” Amelia’s main street, the Ohio Turnpike, was built in 1831 and eventually became part of SR-125. In 1951 the Amelia section of SR-125 was widened and concreted and served as the primary influence of growth of local development patterns since the Village’s dissolution in November 2020.

Location Assessment & Current Development Pattern

In recent years, the Corridor began experience more national investment grade big box and fast-food restaurants. The Main Street Kroger Marketplace, one of the largest Kroger stores in the area, boasting 133,000 square feet of products, opened in Amelia on Aug. 15, 2013. In 2019, Premier Health broke ground on a +/- \$20 million nursing home and rehabilitation facility. However, the project came to a stop and since June 2020 had six mechanics lien claims worth more than \$1 million.



<http://www.ameliavillage.com/amelia-historical-photos.html>



Premier Health Project
Provided by Clermont County Auditor



Kroger Grand Opening 2016
www.clermontsun.com



Casey's Grand opening 2020
www.facebook.com/ClermontChamber

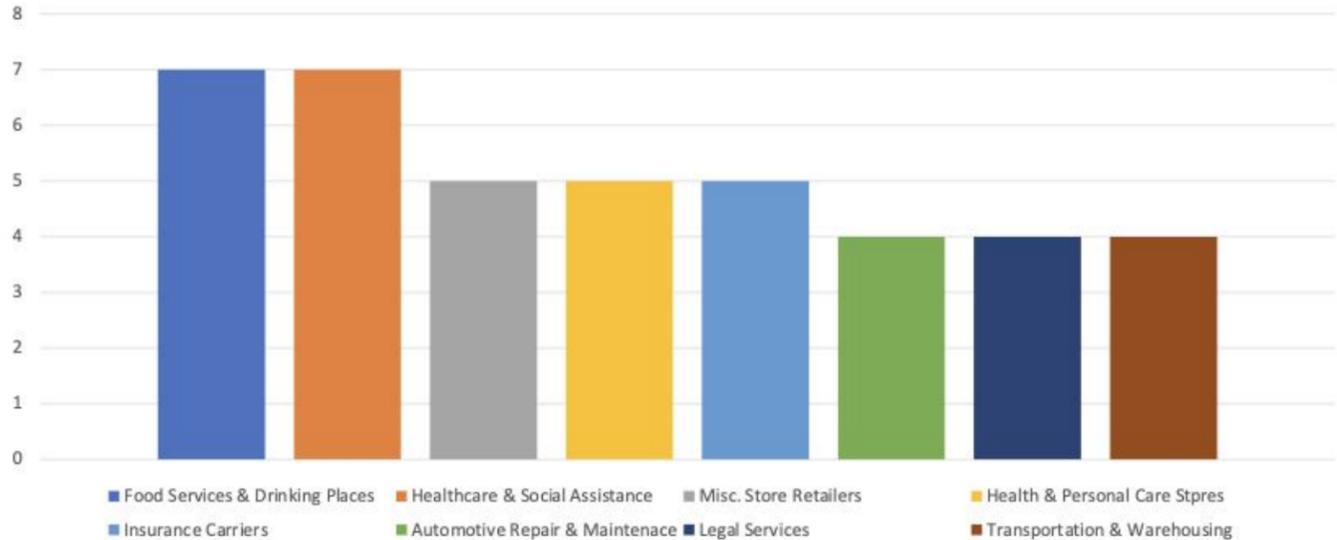
2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery

Existing Real Estate Conditions

Visual Aesthetic	Tired and disconnected appearance
Business Types	Anchored to the west by Kroger Marketplace (built in 2013) and the east is flanked by cluster of fast-food restaurants (including Gold Star Chili, Grammas Pizza, and Pizza Hut). The middle is an ad-hoc of tired (and some new) automotive, discount, small office, apartments, banks, community retail, agricultural and a few historic properties.
Development Pattern	Disorganized development pattern of asset types
Traffic	Traffic congestion is a critical challenge which needs to be addressed along the corridor
Walkability	Poor and unsafe due to traffic congestion and poor planning, creating disconnectivity for residents

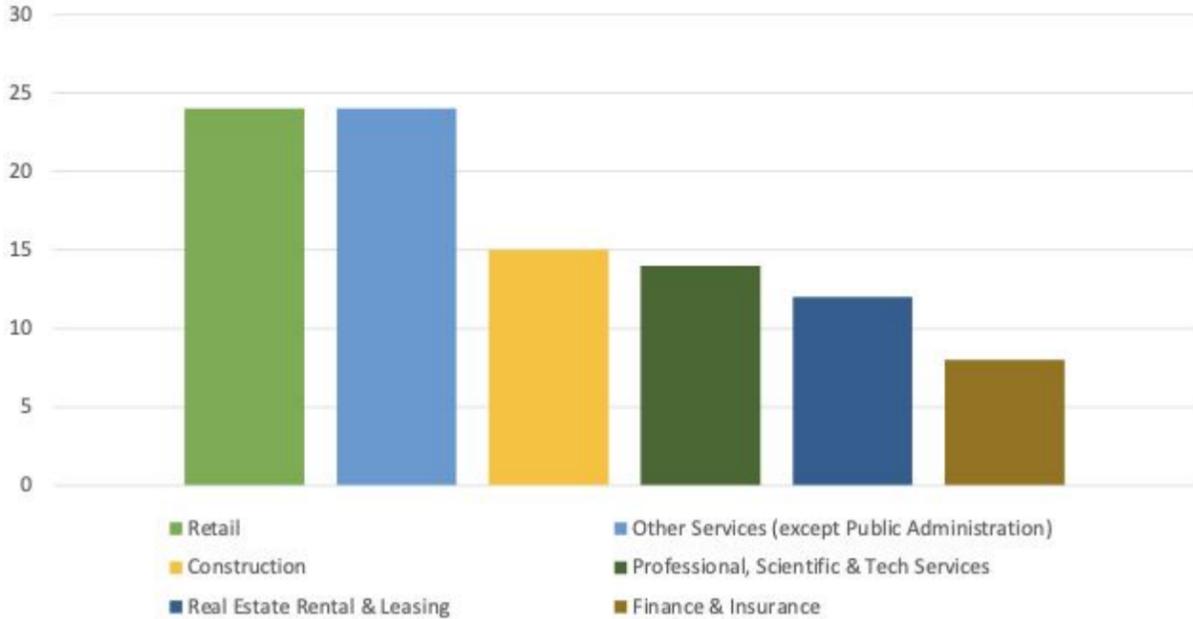
Target Area Leading Business Types

Downtown Amelia (1-Mile Radius)
2 Chapel Rd, Amelia, OH, 45102
NAICS Codes



Target Area Leading Business Industries

Downtown Amelia (1-Mile Radius)
2 Chapel Rd, Amelia, OH, 45102
NAICS Codes



2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery

Corridor 3-Mile Radius

Population

	Target Area*
Population	25,753
Daytime Population	21,134

The Corridor has a strong 3-mile population that meets the criteria of many national retailers, fast food and casual restaurants.

Crime & Safety

Calculated annually per 1,000 residents.

	Village of Amelia***	National Average***
Assault	20	282.7
Murder	0	6.1
Rape	20	40.7
Robbery	0	135.5
Burglary	120.1	500.1
Theft	1,041.2	2,042.8
Motor Vehicle Theft	40	284

The Corridor has extremely low crime when compared to the national average.

Income

	Target Area*	National Average**
Median Household Income	\$65,255	\$62,843
White Collar Occupation	60.2%	NA

The Corridor has a slightly higher “median household income when compared to the national average. Also, over 60% of its population is considered to have “white collar” occupations.

Home Values

	Downtown Amelia*	National Average**
Median Home Value	\$171,757	\$217,500
Home Ownership	67.8%	64%

The 3-mile radius encompassing the Corridor is currently surrounded by a moderate suburban character. Most residents own their own home. Home values are relatively lower than the national average.

Sources
 *U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.
 **<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US,amelia/village/oh/PST045219>
 ***<https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/amelia-clermont-oh/>



2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery

Corridor 3-Mile Radius

Education

	Downtown Amelia*	National Average**
High School Graduate or Higher	89.9%	88%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	29.2%	32.1%

The Corridor's education level is relatively comparable to the national average.

Sources
 *U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.
 **<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US,ameliaivillageohio/PST045219>

2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery

Development Catalysts

By ascertaining the surrounding uses, we identified the following potential catalyst for revitalization of the Corridor. Pierce should capitalize upon public spaces to create programming and entertainment for the Township.

Groh Park

Groh Park is located at 3390 Huntsman Trace and is on 4.874 acres. It includes a paved walking trail, playground, basketball court and skate ramps. Located on the opposite side of Huntsman Trace, catty-corner from Groh Park, the Township owns 65% (Batavia Township 35%) of 2.428 undeveloped acres which could serve as an extension to the park.

As townships work to recover from the impact of COVID-19, parks are increasingly being viewed as economic development catalyst. Groh Park is a potential catalyst for the Corridor. An energized and improved Groh Park will enhance the surrounding area creating neighborhoods where people want to live, and businesses want to locate.

Economic Benefits of Parks

- Increase value of nearby residential and commercial properties
- A popular site criterion for relocating businesses
- Attract prospective customers to nearby businesses
- Events (e.g., farmers market) generate visitors and spending
- Generate foot traffic for nearby business
- Increases quality-of-life for residents and tenants
- Promotes sense of community
- Provide safe and interactive areas for families and children
- Host community-sponsored events



Clermont County Auditor Map

Date:
2/3/2021

CLERMONT COUNTY
AUDITOR
Linda L. Friley, Clermont County Auditor

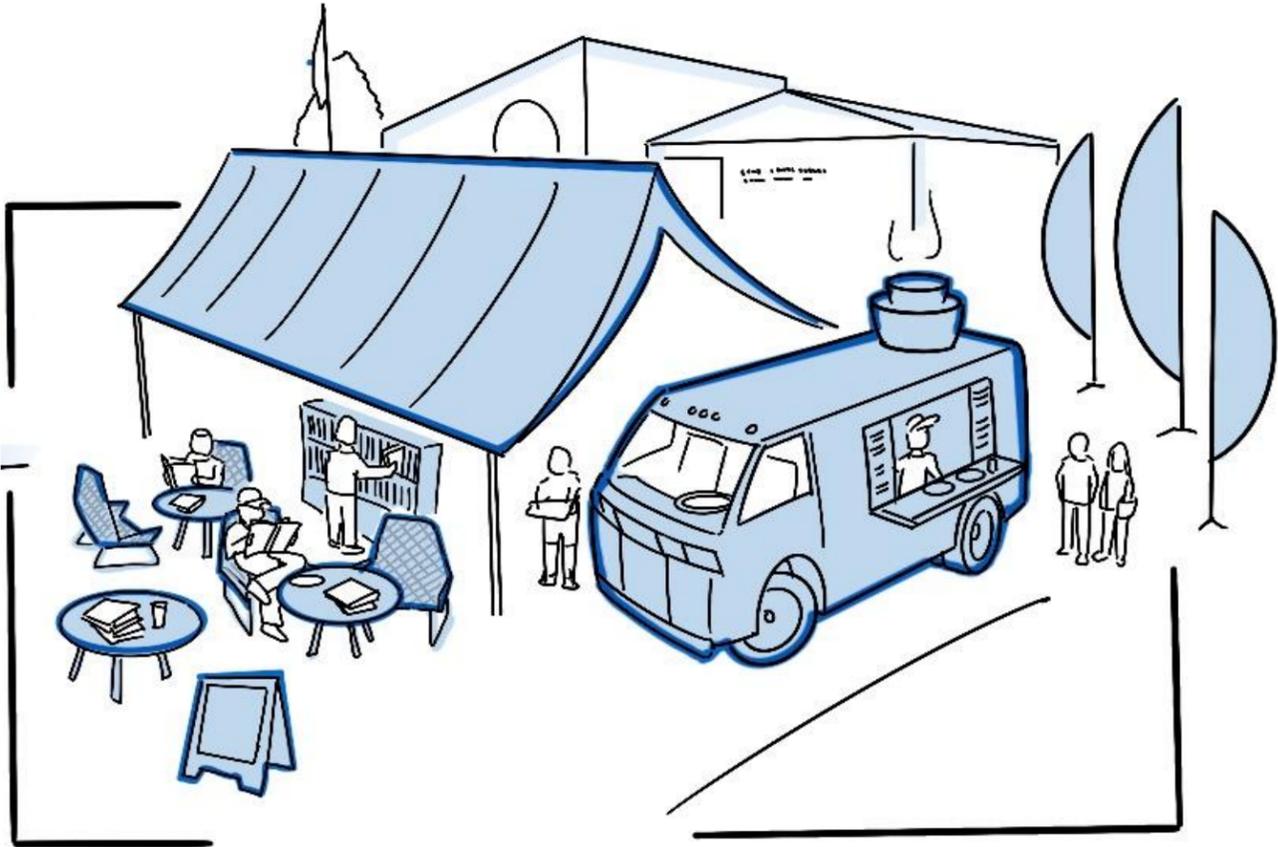


2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery

Clermont County Maple Street (Amelia) Library

Public libraries have evolved into lifelong learning centers that quantifiably and positively impact local workforce and economic development. The Amelia Library is an engagement center where families and the community come together to interact, socialize and learn.

The Amelia Library, coupled with the adjacent 2.59 acres owned by Pierce and Batavia Townships, has the potential to serve as a hub connecting the community, businesses, recreation amenities, and cultural resources integrating walkable and pedestrian friendly pathways and bike paths, while promoting business, entertainment and cultural experiences for residents.



Renderings for conceptual, inspirational, and education purposes only



“ Public libraries are the sole community centers left in America. The degree to which a branch of the local library is connected to the larger culture is a reflection of the degree to which the community itself is connected to the larger culture.

Russell Banks

”

2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery

Pommert & Grimes Properties

The Pommert & Grimes Properties, along SR-125, are the optimal opportunity to develop a mixed-use hub along the Corridor because of the following:

- +/-12 undeveloped acres
- Proximity to the Kroger Marketplace anchored Pierce Town Center
- Adjacent to Glen Mary Park, a new residential community under development, consisting of single-family homes and condominiums
- Previously improved infrastructure (i.e., Glen Mary Dr., Pond View Dr. and roundabout)
- Pommert and Grimes have expressed a willingness to collaborate with Pierce Township on development of their properties

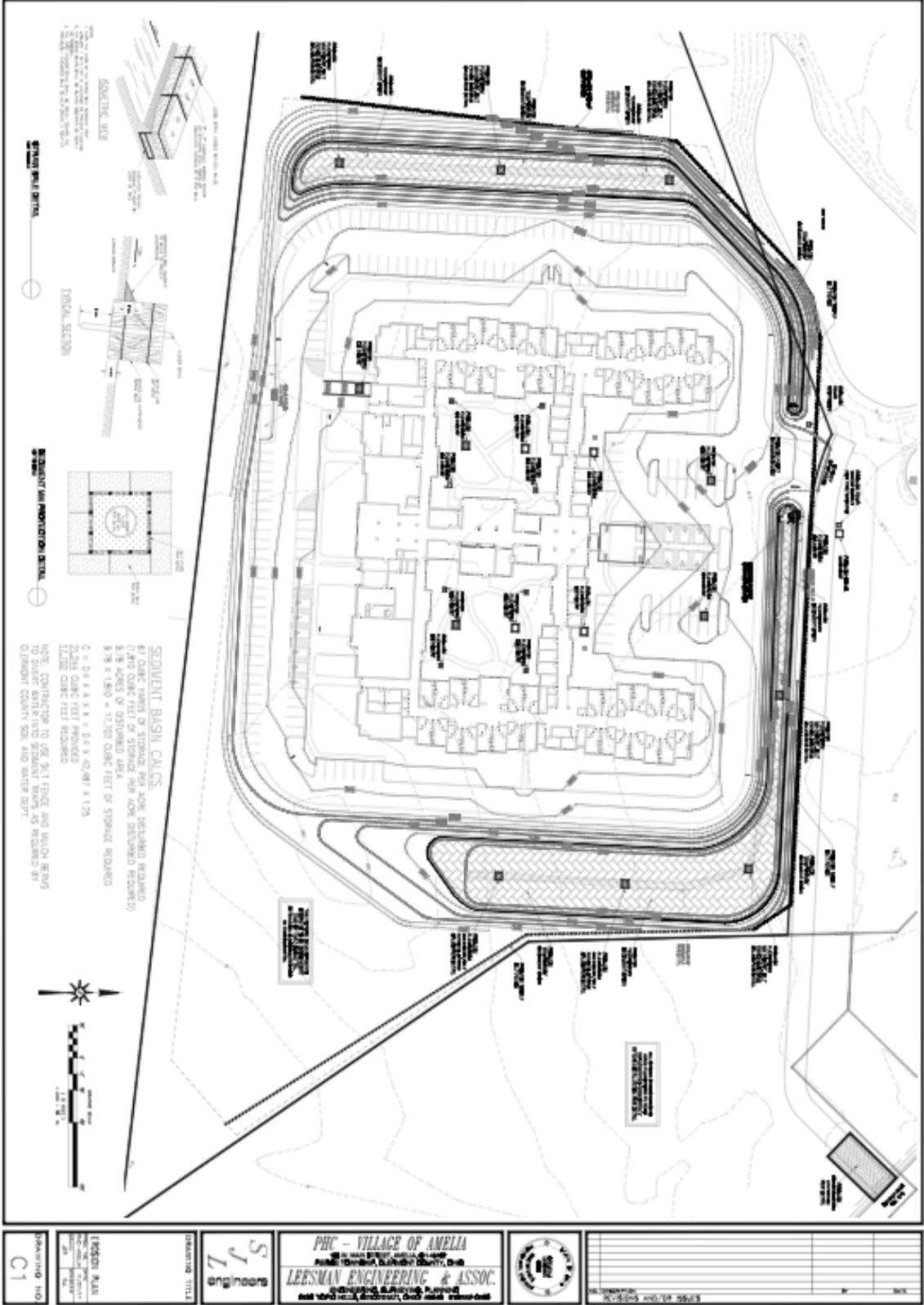


2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery

Premier Property

Adjacent to the Pommert & Grimes Properties is the former Premier nursing home development site. In March 2019, construction was commenced on a planned \$25 million 113-bed skilled nursing home facility. After the facility was +/- 20% completed, the project's lender, GE Credit Union, filed for foreclosure in June 2020 related to a \$16 million construction loan. Subsequently, Prodigy Properties was a judge-appointed receiver of the asset. Multiple developers have expressed interest in acquiring the asset and completing the planned facility.

Public private partnerships have emerged as the catalyst for thriving business districts, with businesses, nonprofits and the municipality being the key partners. Pierce Township has the opportunity to take a more targeted approach to collaborate with the lender, receiver and eventual owner through a public private partnership. Areas of collaboration could be joint marketing efforts, identification of potential developers and end-users, and securing state and federal incentives.



Credit: Premier Site Plan | Provided by Pierce Township

2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery

Stakeholders & Industry Experts

Multiple meetings were conducted with key industry experts throughout the engagement.

Jim Buckner
Miami University SBDC
james.buckner@clermontchamber.com

Daniel Kiley
DKL Management
President
dkiley@dlkmanagement.com

Stewart Devitt
Lee & Associates
Commercial Real Estate Consultant
stewart.devitt@lee-associates.com

Kevin Malof, Esq.
Law Offices of Kevin K. Malof
Real Estate Attorney
kmalof@ptagency.com

Chris Dobrozsi
Neyer Properties
Developer
cdobrozsi@neyer1.com

Jim McCarthy
TW Development Group
Director of Real Estate
jmccarthy@twdevgroup.com

Ed Farruggia
Beaver Creek Interest
Developer
513-702-9419

Mike Paolucci
Select Strategies
Developer
mpaolucci@selectstrat.com

Josh Gerth
Jone Lang LaSalle
Commercial Real Estate Consultant
josh.gerth@am.jll.com

Jay Stewart
Stewart Law
Real Estate Attorney
jay@jstewartlaw.com

Will Goering
TW Development Group
Developer
wgoering@twdevgroup.com

Ben Trautman
J.A. Trautman Realtors
Real Estate Broker
ben@jatrealtors.com

Expert Feedback Highlights

- Access points and connectivity from the neighborhoods are key so residents can avoid SR-125
- Anderson Township's mitigation of Beechmont Ave. is an ideal model
- Need to create development nodes along SR-125
- Township needs to start a strategy for acquiring properties along SR-125 and tearing down old ones
- Public private partnerships are key
- Township needs to concentrate on building relationships with businesses
- Former Amelia residents have a lot of animosity over the dissolution of the Village
- Township demographics are solid, but SR-125 causes a perception problem when attracting national retailers
- Need to stop thinking of SR-125 as anything else other than a main expressway
- Township needs to project a pro-development and business-friendly attitude
- Township needs someone to focus solely on economic development



03

Analysis

- 3.1 Market Demand Analysis
- 3.2 Public Private Partnerships
- 3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration





3.1 Market Demand Analysis

Our market analysis consists of examining demographics, economic trends, stakeholder viewpoints, economic cycles, emerging industries and economic risks pre- and post-COVID impact. Our analysis provides Pierce Township with a detailed understanding of market trends, feasibility of real estate opportunities and development impact on infrastructure.



3.1 Market Demand Analysis

Corridor Highest & Best Needs and Uses

Given the aforesaid and analysis of the following: (a) Pierce Township's objectives; (b) the Corridor's physical attributes, location and nearby catalysts; (c) previous reports and studies; (d) the current market and economy; and (d) stakeholder and industry expert feedback, the following were identified as the Corridor's highest needs and potential uses:

Optimal Potential Needs & Uses

- 1 **Community, Gathering & Recreation Hubs**
- 2 **Mixed-Use Development**
- 3 **Agri-Tech**

Community, Gathering & Recreation Hubs

The City of Amelia Comprehensive Plan (2000) identified the lack of a focal area in the Village as a major issue for Amelia and the Corridor. The study identified the need for a hub along the Corridor comprised of mixed uses and gathering places to serve as a major destination point (i.e., town center, town square).

Respondents of the Amelia Community Survey (2020) "felt strongly that a farmer's market/pavilion/space for community gathering and events is very necessary and currently lacking."

The "Placemaking and Visioning Collaboration Session" conducted by KEI, echoed the need for a primary "hub" along the Corridor. A place where families and the community come together to interact and socialize. Furthermore, research demonstrated that residents desire a transformation of the township into to a safe, walkable community south of 125.

The hub will need to connect the community, businesses, recreation amenities, and cultural resources integrating walkable and pedestrian friendly pathways and bike paths, while promoting business, entertainment and cultural experiences for residents.

Mixed-Uses

Our analysis, along with previous studies, identified the need for more mixed use development along the Corridor that incorporates retail, office, green space, culture and high-density housing.

Investment grade high-density residential areas attract businesses (e.g., restaurants, coffee shops, wine bars, fitness, etc.) and customers positively impacting the local economy and job creation. New high-density residential development often results in vacant and outdated buildings being repurposed and renovated.

Pierce Township should selectively promote the right mix of office, retail, restaurant, residential, and green space to create a destination hub for residents and the region. This would mitigate the dollars that are driven to Anderson and Union Township.

Previous studies, identified the following as Corridor needs:

- Farmer's Market
- Casual restaurant(s)
- Formal sit-down restaurants
- Ice cream shop
- Event space
- Coffee shop
- More retail
- Parks



3.1 Market Demand Analysis

Agricultural Technology (“Agritech”)

Given the township’s proximity to downtown Cincinnati to the west and Ohio’s rural areas to the east, a potential emerging industry to focus on is Agritech.

Agritech is the use of technology and technological innovation to improve the efficiency and output of agriculture.

Emerging and post-COVID industries attract millennials and well-paying jobs that will support the growth of quality housing, retail, local businesses, mixed-use housing, and other amenities in the community.

Redevelopment of Beckjord Power Station could be an ideal location for Agritech and Solar. Industry adjacent businesses will congregate in the commercial Corridor.

“

By 2050 the world demand for food is expected to increase by 60 percent. To meet this challenge, the U.S. will devise new agricultural practices, build new markets and remove unfair trade barriers.”

ShareAmerica

”



3.1 Market Demand Analysis

Business Corridor Highest & Best Uses

Highest & Best Use Four Part Test

In order to determine if the aforesaid are truly the Corridor’s “highest and best uses” the following four factors will have to be studied in more detail:

1. Physically Possible
2. Legally Permissible
3. Fiscally Feasible
4. Most Profitable

Steps 3 and 4 cannot be decided until steps 1 and 2 are analyzed.

Community & Political Support

A crucial factor is whether the use has the support of the community and local government. Even if all four of the test above are met, often many developers will not move forward without community and/or political support (by doing so, the developer risks its reputation, additional substantial time and significant capital).

Highest & Best Use Four Part Test

Physically Possible	Our analysis indicates that the Corridor physically permits the identified uses.
Legally Permissible	While most of the Corridor is zoned General Business Districts and would be suitable for the commercial uses, revised zoning (e.g., PUD) may be required to incorporate a residential component for mixed-use development. Specific zoning, should be considered especially for undeveloped tracts of land given its site characteristics and adjacent environment.
Fiscally Permissible	These uses will allow Pierce Township to maximize its real estate tax.
Most Profitable	These uses will allow Pierce Township to maximize its real estate tax.

3.2 Public Private Partnerships

Public Private Partnership

Necessary Catalyst

COVID-19 has resulted in an uncertain economy and future. As a result, public private partnerships have become increasingly important to mitigate market vulnerability and are necessary catalyst for economic development today. Most importantly, public private partnerships have emerged as the catalyst for thriving business districts, with businesses, nonprofits and the municipality being the key partners. Public private partnerships allows the skills and resources of the public and private sectors to be leveraged in order to deliver projects that promote the growth of a region's human and economic capacity.

REDI Cincinnati & JobsOhio

It's possible that for the Corridor's full development potential to be realized, public-private partnerships will be required. All significant real estate development projects require public and private sector collaboration. REDI Cincinnati can be a key conduit for the aforementioned. Potential public partners could include Clermont County Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Center, Port Authority, REDI Cincinnati and Jobs Ohio.



Credit: Oleg Magni from Pexels



3.3 Placemaking and Visioning Collaboration

Interviews

Sensing topics:

- ❖ Brand Story
- ❖ Strengths & Assets
- ❖ Weaknesses & Obstacles
- ❖ Future Visioning

Participants: 12 interviewees

- ❖ Nick Kelly, Pierce Twp Chair of Board of Trustees
- ❖ Allen Freeman, Pierce Twp Vice Chair of Board of Trustees
- ❖ Eddie McCarthy, Pierce Twp Planning and Zoning Administrator
- ❖ Carmen Meholick, Owner of Marcella's Donuts
- ❖ Bev Gangwer, President of Quail Creek Condo Association
- ❖ Carol Amine, Owner of Golden Rule Catering
- ❖ Ben Trautmann, J.A.Trautmann Realtors Real Estate Broker
- ❖ Mike Paolucci, Select Strategies Principal Real Estate Developer
- ❖ Claudia Carroll, Pierce Twp Assistant Fiscal Office
- ❖ Debbie Schwey, Pierce Twp Fiscal Officer
- ❖ Loretta Rokey, Pierce Twp Administrator
- ❖ Amanda Wheeler, Owner of Wholly Bean Coffee Cart

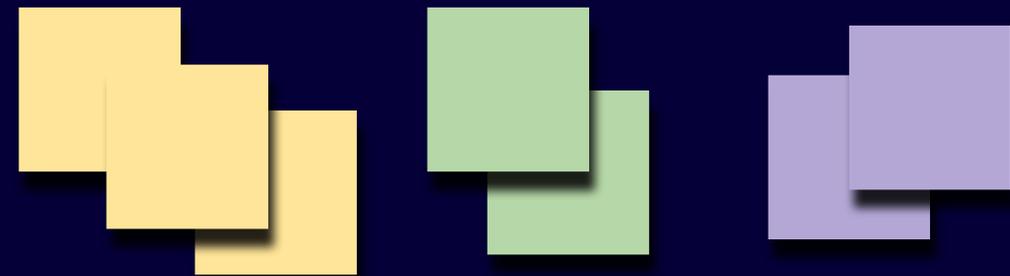
Workshop

Sensing topics:

- ❖ Inspirational Imagery
- ❖ Assets of the Community
- ❖ Placemaking Opportunities

Participants: 28

miro



3.3 Placemaking and Visioning Collaboration

Stakeholder Interview Conclusions

Pierce has good bones and is primed for revitalization.

- Stakeholders expressed perception of great potential for the township as **it has a variety of assets that are important in creating a vibrant commercial corridor** including:
 - Strong sense of community
 - Good demographics, Residents with disposable income
 - Sense of inclusivity and respect for community & neighbors
 - Ease of access, positioned on a major thoroughfare, adjacent communities and activities
 - Upkeep of homes and some township infrastructure
 - High-value, large plot residential community
 - Range of support for suburban lifestyle choice (mix of farm land, scenic views, living density, lot size, etc.)
- Residential living in Pierce is desirable and can fit a variety of lifestyle choices. **The location, topography, value of homes, safety, and proximity to downtown increase the demand for living in Pierce.**

Pierce has a humble, hard working character with high levels of social capital. However, it has an underleveraged differentiator that will be necessary to pull consumers into the commercial corridor and public spaces.

- Pierce's strongest asset is the strength of the community and the people that contribute to it. **The people are down-to-earth, loyal, and have a neighborly disposition; they are consistently willing to step in and step up and are focused on the common good of the community.**
- Nevertheless, with the progress and prosperity, **there is concern over losing the old farm town charm and social capital** as new businesses and developments populate the Township. Pierce should seek out small, local/regional businesses that represent the character of the community and bring revitalization to vacancies. Residents have disposable income, a strong sense of localism and a vested interest in keeping roots and character of the township.
- Pierce's character is not clearly exhibited through its physical & digital appearance. **Pierce would benefit from a brand story to reveal the civic identity that is held within the people of the township.** On the surface, Pierce is perceived as rundown and in need of placemaking efforts. The township must give people a reason to visit the commercial corridor and public spaces.



3.3 Placemaking and Visioning Collaboration

Stakeholder Interview Conclusions

Pierce needs to improve communication & connection strategies to match the character of the community, promoting transparency and neighborliness.

- *Current local businesses have no formalized way of interacting; all connection efforts have been bootstrapped. **A targeted connection strategy is needed to create a network of mutualism between businesses.** This effort should also help assimilate former Amelia Village businesses within the Pierce Commercial Corridor.*
 - ***Small actions with the business community go a long way.** Concerns expressed by former-Amelia businesses (i.e. postal addresses) should be listened to & addressed, with incremental updates / communication.*
- ***The township overall would benefit from proactive communication and community event planning.** The community has expressed desire for events in which they can gather and support local businesses/ organizations. There should be an effort by the township (or a consultant) to plan and socialize these types of gatherings across the township's public gathering spaces.*
- *New businesses and current businesses struggle with the "know how" in navigating government assistance in order to establish and or grow their business. **The township should act as an advocate for these growing businesses, fostering clear communication and accommodations where possible.** If accommodations cannot be made, explanation and assured mutual understanding is necessary in solidifying a trusting relationship with local businesses.*

The current business mix in the commercial corridor does not represent the customer market present in Pierce Township and the adjacent populace.

- ***Dollars are driven outside of Pierce to municipalities such as Anderson and Union Township.** Based on demographics and customer profiles of residents in Pierce and surrounding areas, the Pierce commercial corridor would benefit from a wider selection of upscale retail and restaurants to support the demographics present, while still reflecting the community values. For example, homemade pottery shops, "made in ohio" boutiques or organic farmers markets could satisfy an upscale clientele while reflecting community identity.*
- ***There is a compounding effect of improper business mix and COVID-induced economic decline on current businesses in the Pierce Commercial Corridor.** Many stakeholders perceive that COVID has accelerated the decline for businesses that do not fit the customer demographic in the area, likely speeding up their forecasted closure.*



3.3 Placemaking and Visioning Collaboration

Stakeholder Interview Conclusions

Competitive Municipalities

Stakeholders most often identified the municipalities of: Batavia, New Richmond, Anderson, and Union as key competitors to Pierce's Corridor or residential areas. Often, they were mentioned as competitors because of the cost of land or the ease of accessibility. One important note was that visitors will likely go to Union or Anderson Township if there is something they need, rather than Pierce. Thus, when seeking new businesses, Pierce should consider adjacencies to drive unique commerce into the Township.



Credit: Anderson Township Website



3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration

Workshop Conclusions

Miro Board Content:

- Top Left Text Box:** How has COVID impacted the Twp / your business and what resources would be helpful moving forward?
- Top Right Sticky Notes:** vaccination (government) to go back to normal, herd immunity, WELL being comm, library offered pickup/drop off hours, library had to cut in person programs, so lost family aspect, library received surge of ppl after hours, library a hot spot for comm??, 125 consider, long waiting, no thought.
- Middle Sticky Notes:** healthy futures (get out), WALK (link up), walking town, safe pathways, well lit path, nature (well being), O2 for trees, improve mood, Crish Park - walkway/paved, Places get used more when they are linked, link increases use, increase use of biz dist, foot, Keegan Riley, PT needs PR, need a community network, with local resources of garden - need to get it out.
- Bottom Left Text Box:** How might the Pierce Township identity best represent the best of the past, present & future of our unified community?
- Bottom Middle Sticky Notes:** where is the density??, CENTER OF UNIV., bulls eye center, 15000 in rest of PT, 3500 ppl in former Amelia, 21000 in BT, library as hot spot of comm, what do public spaces look like, tech regulations, will hot spot (for checkout too), if case study will for CBD, grant, wifi in the park... outdoors, get ball to sponsor the park.

Meet Grid Participants:

- Niko Grammas
- Eddie McCarthy
- Megan Haase
- Craig Wright
- Loretta Rokey
- John Koehler
- Allen Freeman
- Nicole Roberts

3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration

Workshop Conclusions

Pierce lacks a manifested civic identity, brand story and thus a sense of place, making its stretch of 125 and south feel like a “pass through” town.

The township would benefit from the refinement of their story and the exhibition of that story through brand activation. There is pride for Pierce and desire for unity across the township that should be showcased

Due to the proximity of other municipalities, Pierce needs to have a unifying brand and capitalize on commonalities between neighboring municipalities.

Some concepts that were discussed as commonalities include the tie to Clermont County and the topography/ natural elements of the region. The following concepts can be used to tie the communities together from a branding perspective.

- Using the river as a landmark / symbol of connectivity
- Creating connected hiking and biking trails
- Identifying as a well-being community

show that you've arrived	Needs clear arrival point	Destination pt	well defined central business district - more branding of a downtown area	lack of definition section by section	landscaping (welcoming)	gateway opportunity - before the Kroger	branded downtown area	nothing that IDs pierce
pass thru town	people dont realize the other side is Batavia	co-op with other municipalities?						
clermont ct identity tie in	Clermont has logo - opportunity of county wide initiative	no there there	"We are Pierce"	"village" of Pierce	"Cincinnati, USA" is own brand for "City State"	holistic brand story	want to get rid of boundries	events for all communities (easter egg)
history can be pulled together	Show Amelia story but without the name Amelia	Uniformity across all neighborhoods	"east PT"	"proudly pierce" part of clermont	show pierce connect with Clermont	increase comm spirit	wouldn't mind brand that (clermont / pierce own city state)	Welcoming board-- replace maybe Kroger Amelia board
add and strengthen pierce (don't lose Amelia)	one comprehensive sign system (like clermont)	Pierce Pride	Known for being a rural community in close proximity to the City of Cincinnati.	clermont has recog w eastgate	complete community-- entirety of PT	fabric is all of pierce	we are ONE community	regional initiatives-- regional way finding system...
ACCESS to nature!!	hiking trails, river, etc	"escape other areas"	rural feel nature feel	pierce is where I can go to have space	fishing???	Venice of PT	so much potential	new Richmond river access too
river connectivity/ nature preserve??	new ideas for nature/bizs	vaccination (comm) to go back to normal	healthy futures (well comm)	nature (well being)	O2 for trees	Nature improve mood	herd immunity	WELL being comm

3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration

Workshop Conclusions

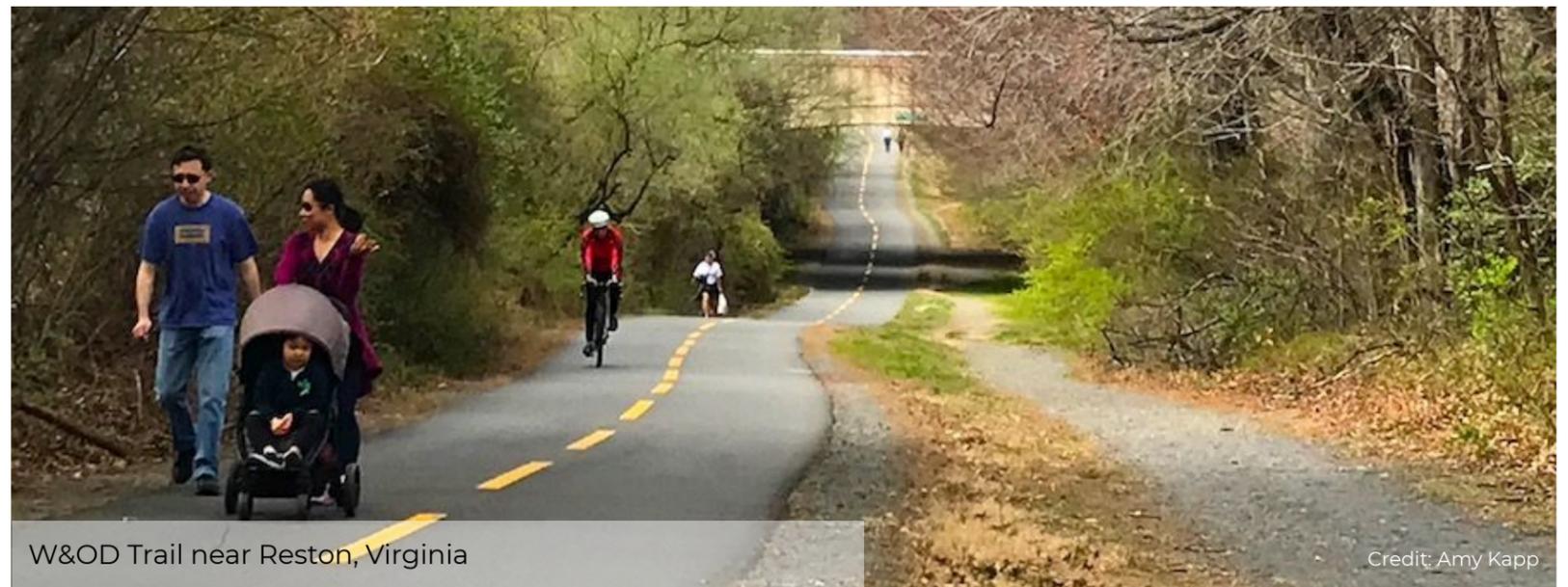
Participants desire a transformation of the township into to a safe, walkable community south of 125.

Connectivity routes should focus on creating a "localism hub" through of Maple, Oak , Jenny Lind, and Denny Dr. Due to this plot's proximity to key community businesses and its considerable walkability compared to 125, this slice of Pierce should be re-envisioned as the local business hub with high walkable access and connectivity.

Additionally, connection and ease of access to parks should be considered in this transformation effort as events and planning take shape in Pierce to unify and engage the community.

A series of connected, forested trails with the flexibility for walk and bike transport could increase walkability in the township while also adding a unique differentiator to Pierce.

ped walking	cut thru sts	Low speed limit	walk to post office	walkable	Bigger sidewalks for bikes	super blocks (need walkable blocks)	batavia needs to factor in w walkability	Groh Park used for woods/pond
Linked walking paths	walking town	well lit path	targeted paths in NBDs	Incorporate some bike trails	10' wide walkways	SAFE	safe sidewalks	Park
limit driving	125 traffic = diff/fast	Amelia Parkway on south side	jenny lynd + 125 traffic	new traffic light helped	amelia prkwy important in creating Dwtwn	roundabout near 132 proposed	manage traffic v. walkability	Traffic is bad through former village
study around transport	connect Post office, library & a police dept with park	around the library & post office is the central hub (125/Maple/Oak)	pull people from all over	Need connectivity Opp	well defined central business district - more branding of a downtown area	Link it and they will come!	city biz district (near lib)?	the new traffic light there has really helped slow traffic



W&OD Trail near Reston, Virginia

Credit: Amy Kapp

Workshop images for Illustrative and Educational purposes only

3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration

Workshop Conclusions

In addition to walkability, there is a desire for a variety of community-sponsored events and public gathering spaces that can provide families with leisurely activities.

Participants mentioned parks, a town center, art gatherings, and sports to help increase the diversity of entertainment and activities available in Pierce.

Many are currently driving far outside the township in order to find weekend, family-friendly activities.

With the desire for a thriving local business district, pedestrian, bike, and vehicular wayfinding will be critical to the overall experience of the township.



Photo by Beth Macdonald on Unsplash

3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration

Workshop Conclusions

The Township would benefit from public relations efforts in order to spread awareness and foster relationships with local businesses.

In order to achieve the desire to become a connected community with widely attended events, Pierce must increase its public relations efforts.

Sharing Township updates, providing marketing for the township as a whole, and creating trusting relationships with local businesses are a few examples that stakeholders mentioned would be important in bolstering communication efforts.

Reactivating the business association would stimulate revitalization in the corridor. Many businesses in Pierce have taken strides in making innovative accommodations for the change in consumer buying habits. The business ecosystem would benefit from overall knowledge sharing and efforts on behalf of a progressive business association to create an environment for the new consumer (i.e. free park/public space wifi, technology accessibility, expanded restaurant services, etc.)

figure out free wifi in parks	comm posting board	Need a community newsletter	Will need support of comm - need to "get it out there!"	PT needs public relations	PT Needs story-telling for marketing	graphic (where does population and traffic go)
foot traffic after COVID	increase use of biz dist	linkage increases use	Places get used more when they are linked	Getting in the car often leads to leaving the area	highlight biz who stepped up and stepped in for COVID	How have other communities done MKTing
amelia used to have meetings	twp needs to promote themselves	neighbors talk to each other even if twp doesnt	social media presence	knowledge share to create connection	promote twp meetings/info	Bob Lees doing great job promoting New Richmond
biz have been innov during COVID(lib)	Focus on positive too - Library did amazing, Gold Catering	greatly expanded access to diff restaurants	Library offered curbside pickup (& after hours lockers)	Library extended range of WIFI all the time - after hours too	Consumer behavior Δ	synergy between biz
biz ideas and assistance	biz financials after COVID	After COVID WFH, people will want to go to places they can walk to	need high ped density	Create Center of universe	survivability --> sustainability	COVID public tech implications
wfh in the park... Cincy Bell Sponsor	SBA partner and univ. partner	SBDC assist biz in planning and strat	Library a hot spot for comm	High speed internet to 125 corridor	need a Central pt for all municipal-ities	library as hotspot
what do public spaces look like after COVID						

3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration

Exercise Overview

Participants placed dots of various preferential value on images of different themes. This exercise helps us understand the amenities and features that comprise the sense of place for the future Pierce Twp Commercial Corridor. Number labels on each of the following images indicate the voting dot scores from participants.

Placemaking Themes:

- Community Gathering Spaces
- Gateways, Markers & Directionals
- Murals & Public Art
- Parks and Plazas
- Brewery / Biergarten
- Signature Streets

Voting Dots:



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3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration

Community Gathering Spaces & Socially-Distanced, Covid-Safe Public Events



Community Gathering Spaces & Socially-Distanced Public Events

Creating engaging spaces and activities that bring the community together safely are key to the future growth within Pierce. There is a strong desire to integrate places that inspire new, family-friendly experiences that feature open-air gathering spaces. Opportunities from pop-up events, to local biergartens, to enhanced parks and recreation will entertain existing residents and attract new visitors alike. Groh and Shank Park are valued for their health and wellness benefits. The green space can easily be enhanced with elements such as gazebos, pond features, and monuments to show community pride. Future opportunities bring even more youthful energy to the community with right-sized outdoor play features with integrated technology. Investing in outdoor athletics will also be key. Athletic features such as skatepark areas, walking paths, frisbee golf, tennis and basketball can be unifying gathering space for both Batavia and Pierce. Flexible activations that can be setup and removed are popular for seasonal events, such as antique shows, Christmas markets, weekend food truck events, and art fairs. Activating parking lots with pop-up events such as a lending library, can create a central place where everyone can meet. By connecting the green space behind the library with a walking path to Sadona Ridge, Pierce will have increased accessibility and safety to and from the commercial corridor.

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3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration

Gateways, Directionals & Public Art



Gateways, Directionals & Public Art

Welcoming gateways enhance the visitor arrival experience into the Corridor – they let you know that you have arrived. Gateway features with a solid stone or brick base and integration into the landscape with plantings and flowers on display are most preferred. A new civic signage system can provide Pierce with a clear brand identity and seamless traffic connectivity for the commercial district. Integrating streetscape banners will promote a unified sense of place along SR-125, while changeable message boards can increase open communication with the community.

Public art is another way to visualize Pierce Township’s unique sense of place. There is a clear preference for art installations that use the natural environment, are not too abstract, and that are purposeful to the Pierce community.

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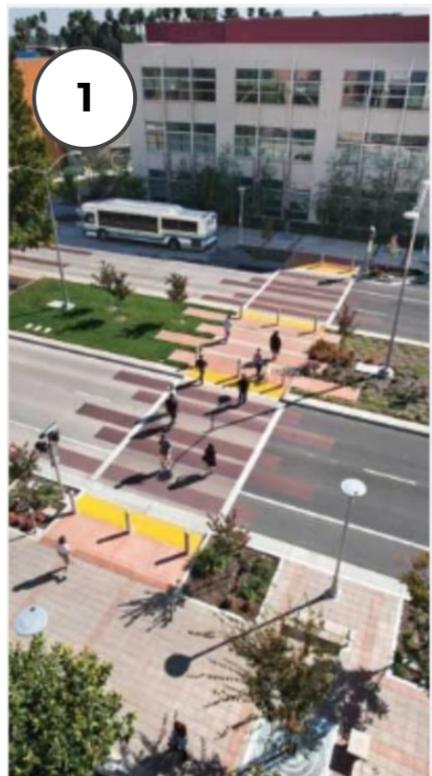
3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration

Signature Streets, Parks & Plazas



Signature Streets, Parks & Plazas

The future Pierce Township streetscape will consist of signature destinations and common green space with park activities and amenities, designed to stimulate the corridor. There is interest in engaging the community through tactical urbanism, to create temporal activations to catalyze long-term change.



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04

Recommendations

- 4.1 Business Marketing & Recruitment
- 4.2 Civic Brand Building
- 4.3 Placemaking Strategy & Streetscapes
- 4.4 Economic Development Tools
- 4.7 Implementation Plan

4.1 Business Marketing & Recruitment Strategies

01	SCENIC NATURE & WILDLIFE
02	SENSE OF COMMUNITY
03	AGRI-TECH
04	LOCALISM
05	STRONG & DIVERSE RESIDENTIAL MARKET
06	REVISED RETAIL MARKETING STRATEGY

Marketing & Recruitment

Begin to build an identity through marketing, media and community support. Pierce Township must begin to craft a narrative to why the Corridor is an ideal location for businesses.

1) Promote, Enhance & Maintain Scenic Qualities & Wildlife.

Pierce Township should promote, enhance and maintain the scenic qualities and wildlife that makes it an attractive and desirable place to live. This differentiator should be highlighted as part of the township's brand. When possible, any new development should complement the natural environment.

2) Emphasize Pierce's Strong Sense of Community.

Pierce's strongest asset is the strength of the community and the people that contribute to it. Pierce has underlying values of inclusivity, respect, and commitment to the common good; it's a place where strong values of respect and family run deep. "Family Oriented" and "Neighborly" appear in the top three identity values across visitors, residents and business owners. The people are down-to-earth, loyal, and have a neighborly disposition; they are consistently willing to step in and step up and are focused on the common good of the community. Residents have a strong sense of localism and a vested interest in keeping roots and character of the township "downhome," while having openness to progress and prosperity.

3) Position Pierce Township as a leading destination for Agritech in Greater Cincinnati.

Agritech is the use of technology and innovation to improve the efficiency and output of agriculture. Given the township's proximity to downtown Cincinnati to the west and Ohio's rural areas to the east, a potential emerging industry to focus on is Agritech. By focusing on emerging and post-COVID industries, such as Agritech, the township has the opportunity to attract millennials and well-paying jobs that will support the growth of quality housing, retail, local businesses, mixed-use housing, and other amenities along the Corridor.



4.1 Business Marketing & Recruitment Strategies

4) Use localism as a key driver to create an authentic experience and make Pierce Township a destination that stands apart from competing business districts. Locally-owned business have historically been the backbone of small business districts. People continue to “buy local” and often prefer small business over chain or national stores. Localism is a developing trend and economic development model centered on the community, small business, essential jobs, and responsible corporate citizenship. At the core of localism, too, is recruiting, supporting and growing startups and second-stage businesses.

5) Place emphasis on the Township’s strong and diverse residential market.

Residential living in Pierce is desirable and can fit a variety of lifestyle choices. The location, topography, value of homes, safety, and proximity to downtown increase the demand for living in Pierce. The 3-mile radius encompassing the Corridor is currently surrounded by a moderate suburban character. Most residents own their own home. Home values are relatively lower than the national average.

6) Revise the Corridor’s retail marketing strategy by collaborating with Select Strategies.

The reality is that Pierce has residents with disposable income that generally spend it outside of the township. When Select Strategies, the developer and operator of the Pierce Town Center, recruited the Kroger Marketplace, the traditional 1-3-5 miles radius demographics used by national retail site selectors did not adequately demonstrate the strength of the Pierce Township market. The developer had to “think out of the box” by employing a polygon demographic footprint showing the township’s strong demand for investment grade national retail and restaurants. The township should collaborate with Select Strategies on a marketing and demographics package, employing the strategy used to secure the Kroger Marketplace, to attract more national retail, specialty stores and fast casual restaurant



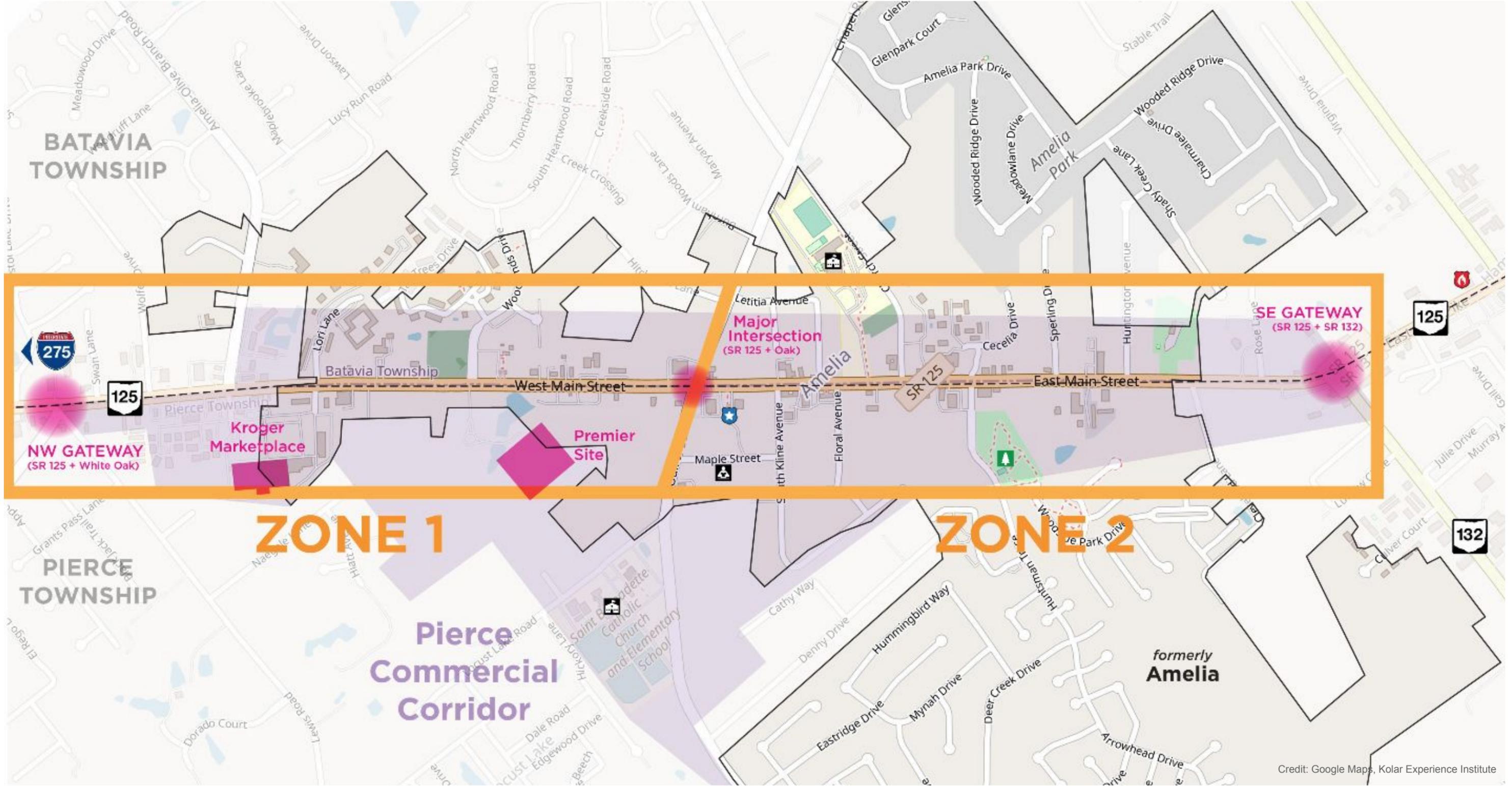
4.2 Civic Brand Building



A Civic Brand has greater meaning and impact when it is woven into current plans, programs and places. The new vision for the Business District creates an opportunity to celebrate narratives from Pierce Township’s past, present and future. Each of these narratives could be expressed differently throughout the community. Depending on the visual expression, function, location and prominence these narratives can amplify the Pierce brand in an impactful way.

4.3 Placemaking Strategy & Reconfigured Streetscapes

Key Focus Zones, Pierce Commercial Corridor



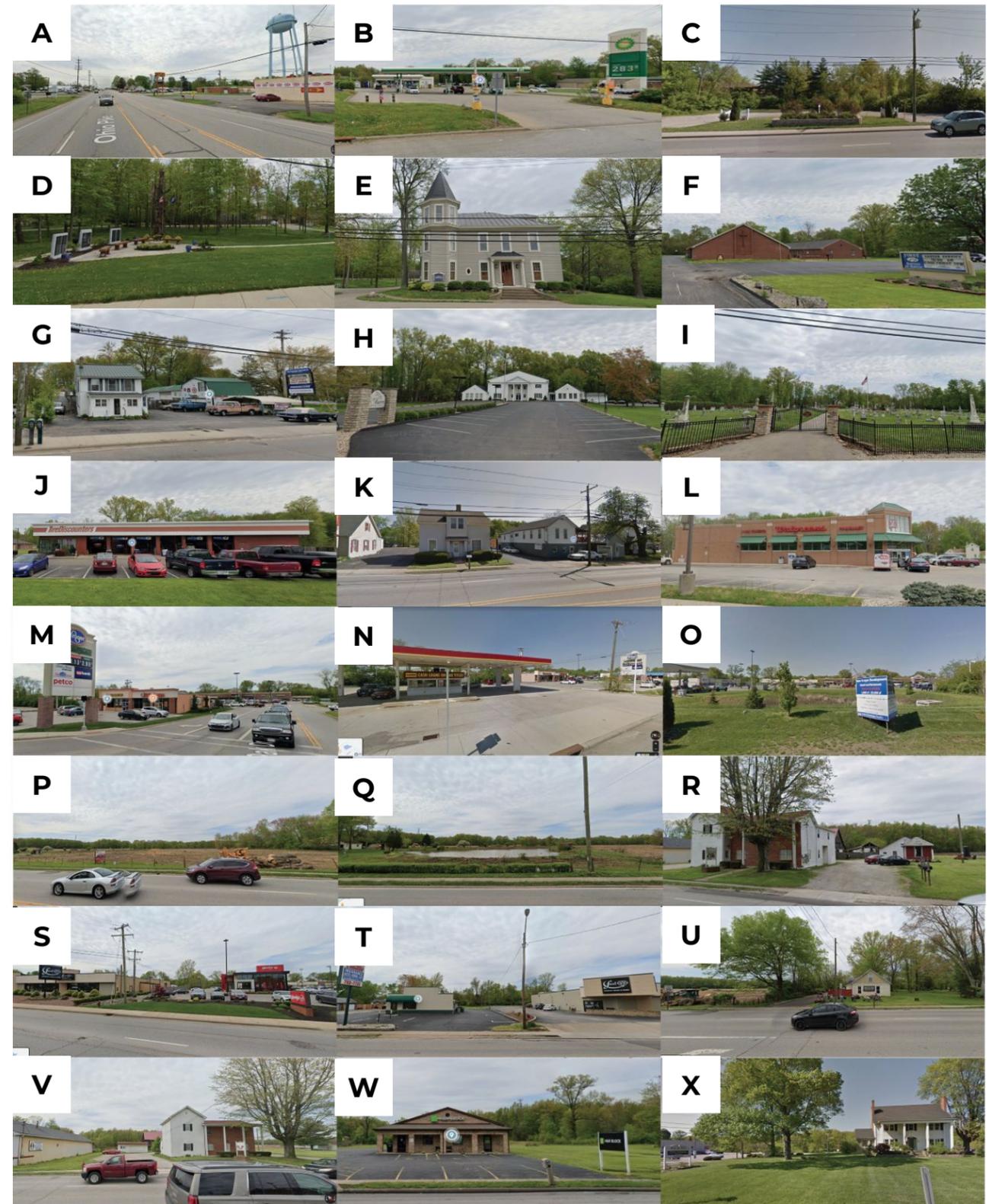
4.3 Placemaking Strategy & Reconfigured Streetscapes

Zone 1

White Oak Rd & Oak St

Existing Assets in Zone 1

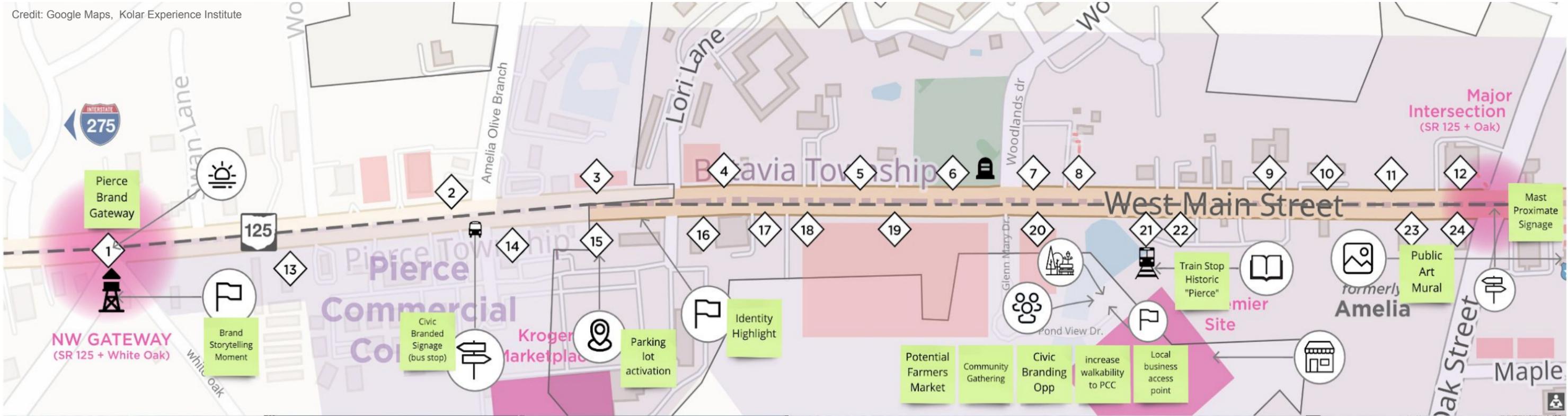
- Matthew Hamrick American Family Insurance
- Supersam (Convenience store)
- Starlite Auto Sales
- Clay's Auto Shop
- Gear Motors
- Tombstone Cycles
- Red Zone Bar & Grill
- Store Space Self Storage
- Dennis Smith Auto Sales
- CamperSmart Repair Shop
- AutoZone Auto Parts
- Penn Station
- Carwash of Amelia
- Papa John's Pizza
- Discount Beer & Tobacco
- Poochie's Place
- BP
- Kroger Marketplace / Fuel
- Pill Box Pharmacy
- Little Caesars
- Palm Beach Tan
- Fox & Fox Co, LPC
- Walgreens
- Amelia Florist Wine & Gift Shop
- PetCo
- VIP Wireless & Smoke Amelia
- Supercuts
- Don Rigo (Restaurant)
- Anytime Fitness
- Wendy's
- HyperShine Car Wash
- Johnny Parsons Insurance
- Facet Jewelry, Music & Pawn
- Campbell & Associates Insurance Agency
- Fi.d.o. (Pet supply)
- EC Nurre Funeral Homes, Inc
- Beco Monuments
- Amelia Admin Building
- H&M Surveying Services, Inc
- Professional Furniture Services
- Woodside Church
- Tire Discounters
- Beauty Shop
- Homestead Used Books
- H&R Block



Credit: Google Maps Street View

4.3 Placemaking Strategy & Reconfigured Streetscapes

Credit: Google Maps, Kolar Experience Institute



Rolling out the civic experience from the NW Gateway.

Starting at the northwest gateway and heading southeast, there should be a clear indication of arrival in Pierce; proud displays of civic identity should be at intersections and down the 125 corridor at especially at landmarks, such as the Kroger complex, and the bus stop.

Beyond civic identity, the township needs places and events at which people can gather.

Pond View Dr poses an opportunity to create a walkable public space and engagement center. With the open land at the backdrop of this retention pond, it could be a prime location for a farmers market. It also signals a sense of place to vehicular and pedestrian traffic coming from a reinvigorated and walkable Oak St.

Opportunities Icon Legend

- Gateway Arrival
- Placemaking Feature
- Community Gathering Space / Pop-Up Events
- Heritage Storytelling
- Streetscape / Landscape Amenities
- Retail / Restaurant / Mixed-Use Opportunity
- Wayfinding Signage
- Brand Activation
- Public Art / Mural

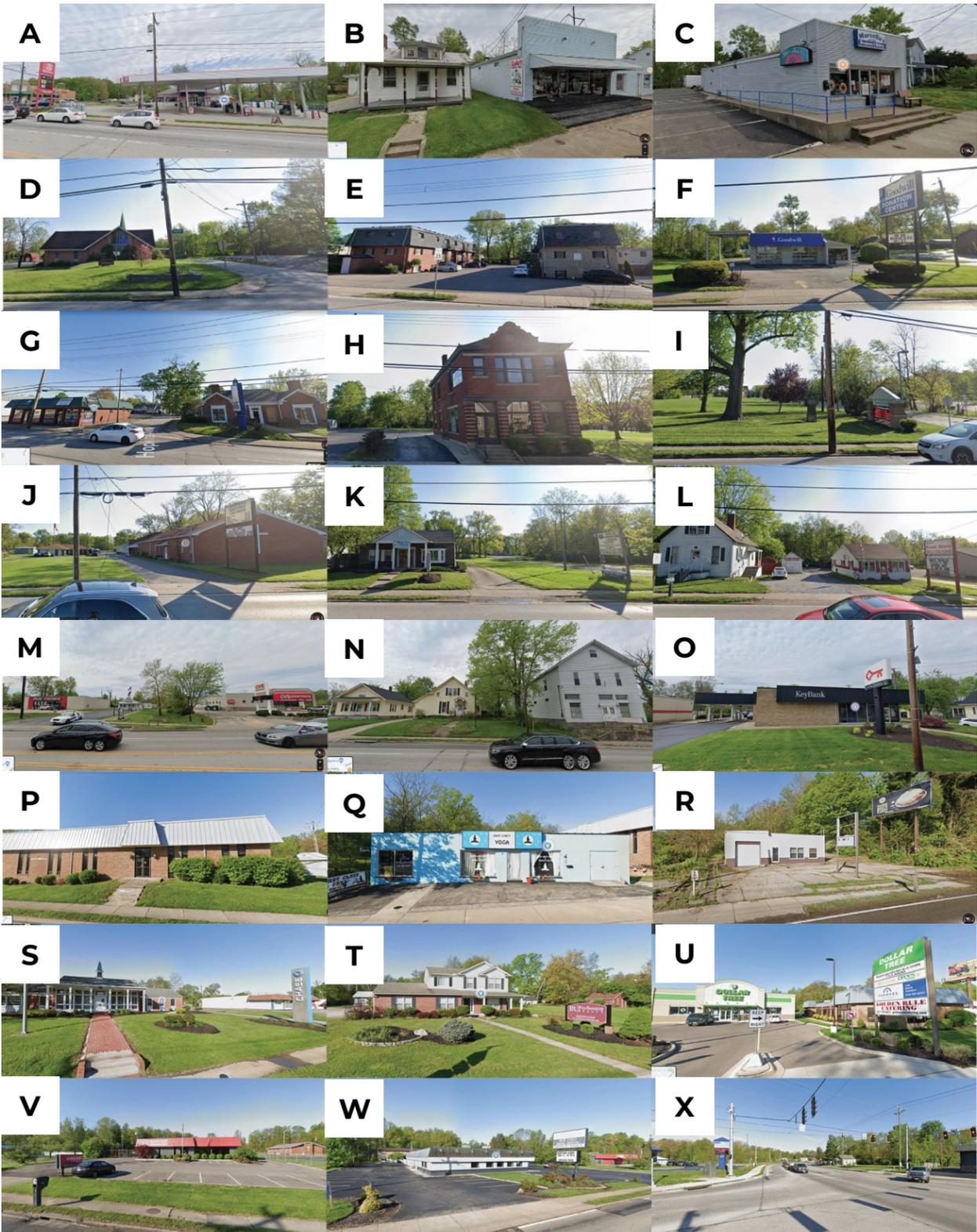
4.3 Placemaking Strategy & Reconfigured Streetscapes

Zone 2

Oak St & SR 132

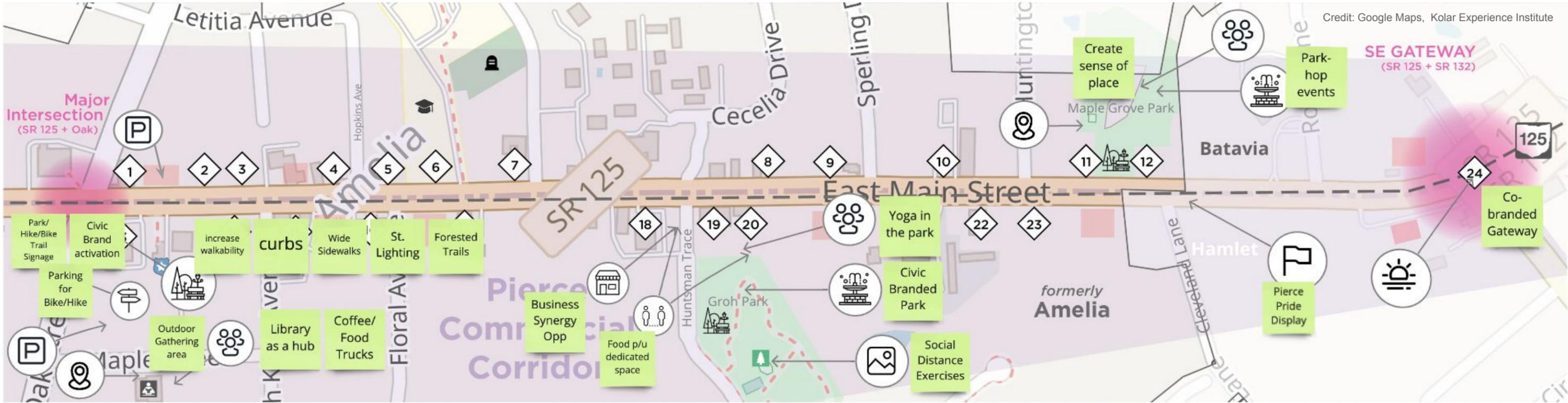
Existing Assets in Zone 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speedway Clermont County Public Library, Amelia Branch CVS O'Reilly Auto Parts Luke's Sewing Centers Marcella's Doughnuts & Bakery Pam & Patches (Quilt Shop) Extreme Automatics Extreme OEM Transmissions KeyBank Dollar General King Smoking Shop Mad Tatter Amelia Foot and Ankle (Vaughn Blackburn, DPM) Chase Bank William Rapp Law Offices Carter Home Improvement Amelia Elementary School Amelia United Methodist Church SGT, Inc (Computer repair) Golden Rule Catering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genoa Healthcare Dollar Tree Eagle Professional Solutions (Tax preparation) Phoenix Place (non-profit) Goodwill (Donation Center) Ohio Pike Church of God Carstar Central Baptist Church of Amelia Main Street Animal Hospital Brandsetter's Kangaroo Milford Auto Mart Amelia Floor Store The Car Guys Auto Mart Gold Star Chili River Hills Bank Awad's Auto & Marine Upholstery Brooks AG Parts (Farm Supply) Marathon Queen City Laundry, Amelia Gamma's Pizza PAS Tattoos & Piercings
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Credit: Google Maps Street View

4.3 Placemaking Strategy & Reconfigured Streetscapes



Reimagine Pierce as an entertaining district with a focus on localism.

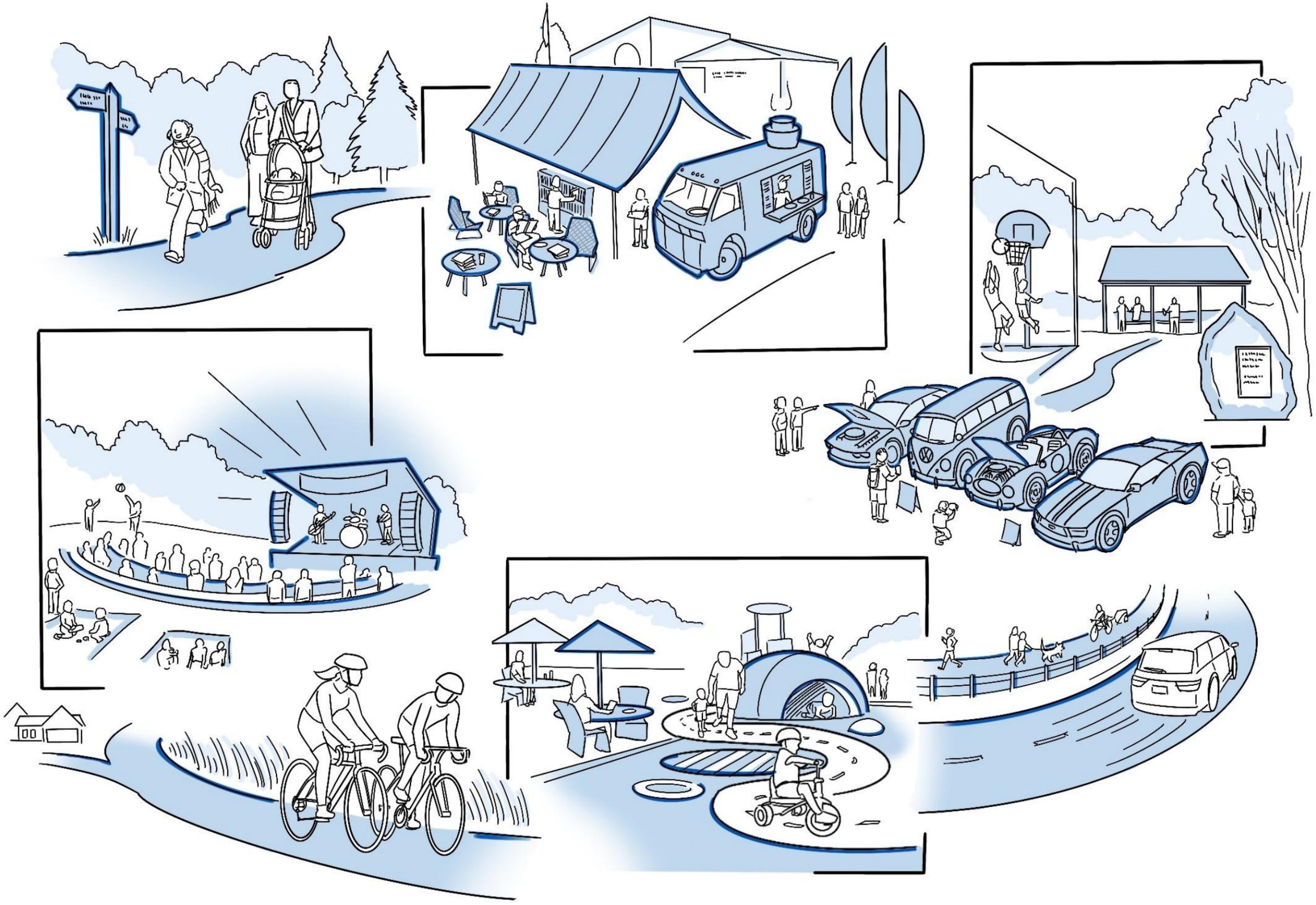
The slice of Pierce that lies between the cross streets of SR-125, Jenny Lynd, Denny Dr, and Huntsman Trace should be reimagined as a small business corridor filled with local businesses and public gathering pockets. Increasing the walkability to the south of 125 will be essential in securing and recruiting unique, eclectic businesses to the Corridor that match the upscale desires of the community.

Pierce should also capitalize upon public spaces to create programming and entertainment for residents and visitors.

One example of such programming desired by community stakeholders was an outdoor lending library and gathering space at the corner of Maple and Oak St. Repurposing land across the street (partial township ownership) into easy parking and food truck stations would optimize public space and serve as a destination point—a prime location for a display of civic branding and a comprehensive bike/hike signage system.

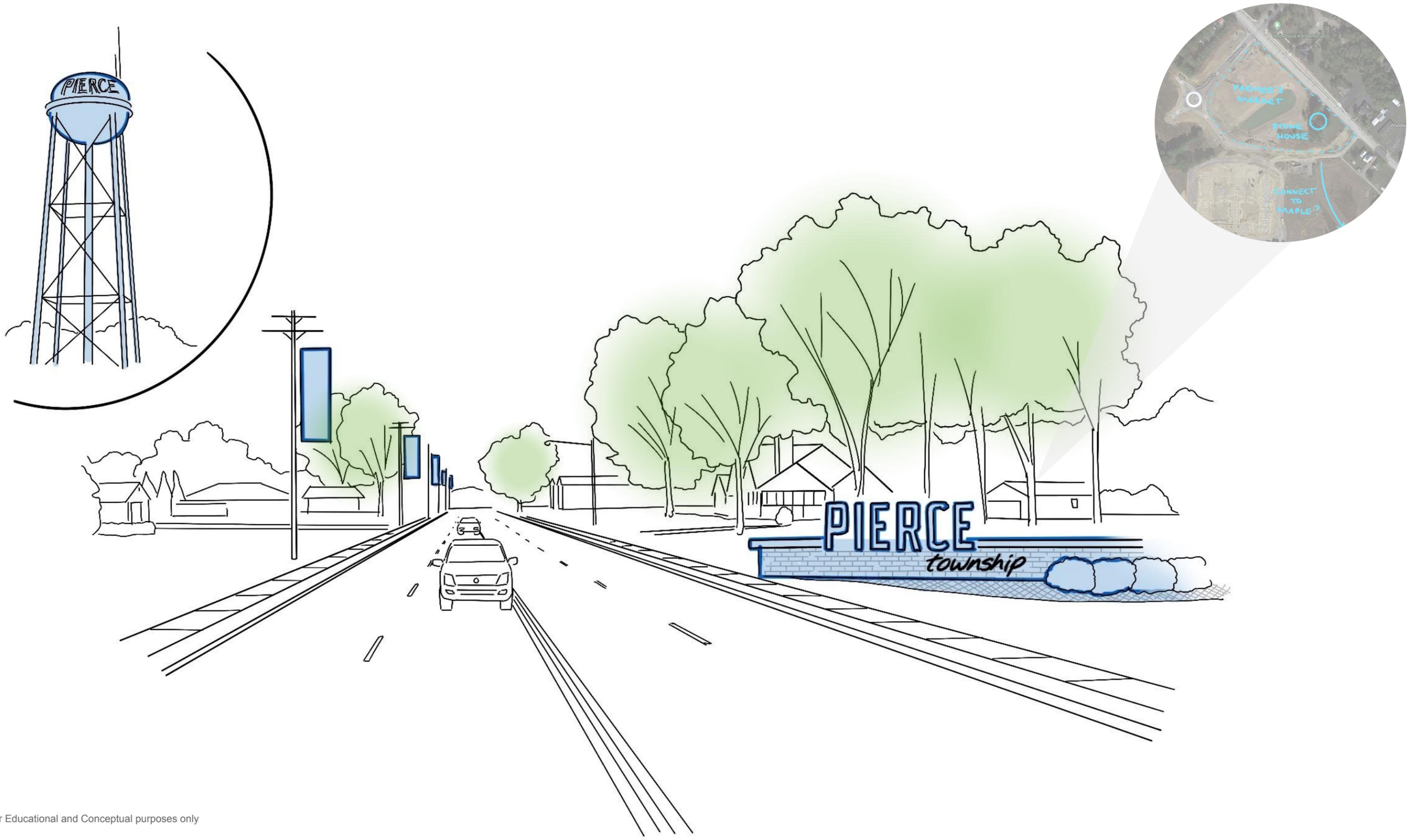
	Gateway Arrival		Parking
	Placemaking Feature		Parks & Plazas
	Community Gathering Space / Pop-Up Events		Social Distancing Considerations
	Streetscape / Landscape Amenities		Retail / Restaurant / Mixed-Use Opportunity
	Wayfinding Signage		Public Art / Mural
	Brand Activation		

4.3 Placemaking Strategy & Reconfigured Streetscapes



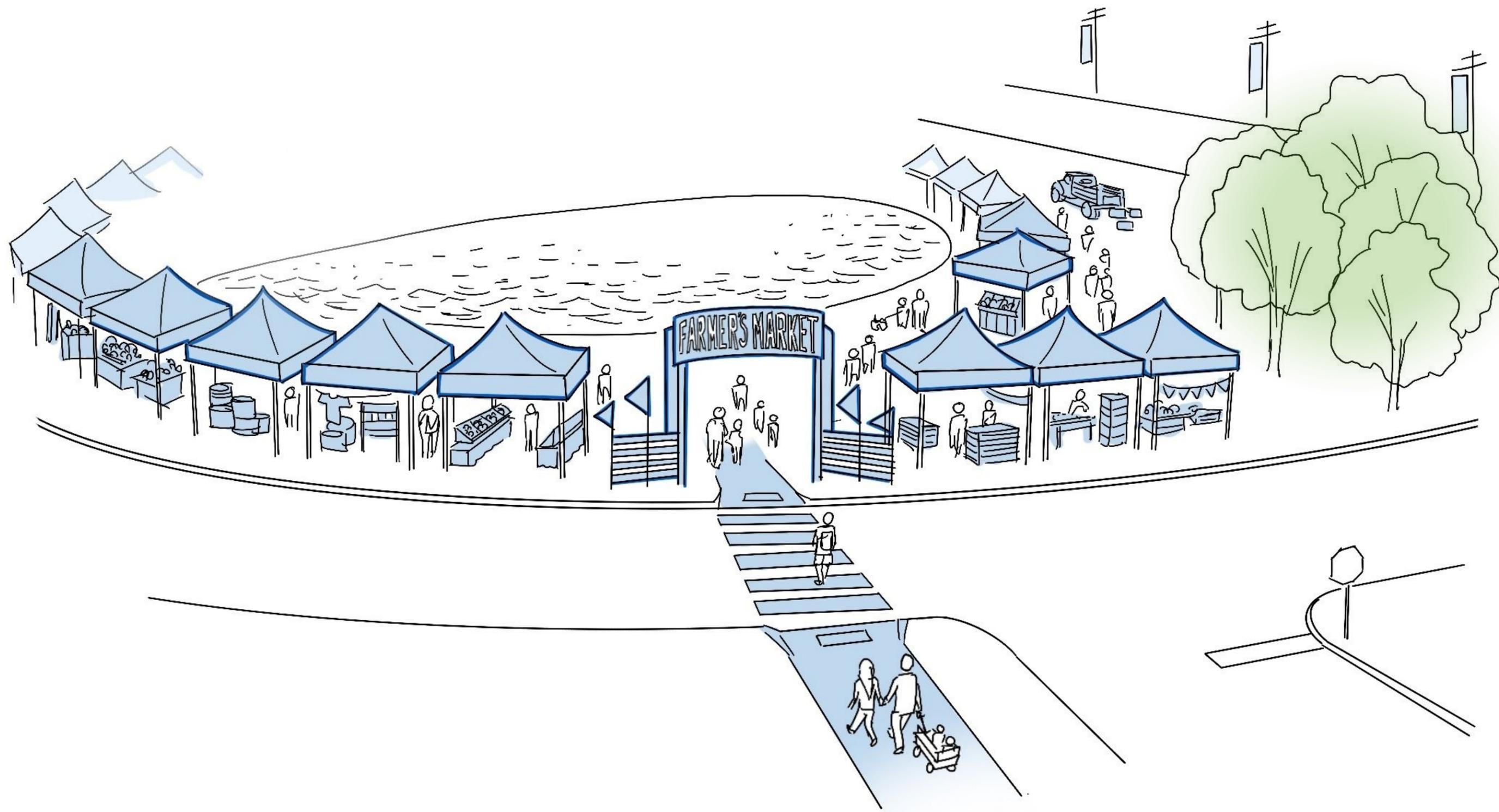
Sketches for Educational and Conceptual purposes only

4.3 Placemaking Strategy & Reconfigured Streetscapes



Sketches for Educational and Conceptual purposes only

4.3 Placemaking Strategy & Reconfigured Streetscapes



Sketches for Educational and Conceptual purposes only

4.4 Economic Development Tools

Connecting & Promoting	
Prospecting	Consistently engage with real estate brokers, site selectors, REDI Cincinnati, Small Business Development Center, Port Authority and developers to learn about prospects and market Business Corridor opportunities.
Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)	Consider forming a CIC to become an active participant in the Corridor development.
Benchmarking	Benchmark and network with peer communities that have successfully revitalized their business districts.
Neighboring Communities Collaboration	Collaborate and network with neighboring communities such as Batavia Township to determine areas of synergy.
Business Corridor Website	Website designated to the Corridor's plan vision, goals, policies, incentives and opportunities.
Private Public Partnerships	
Business Corridor Planning	Trustees should plan an annual fiscal and policy directive for Corridor revitalization.
Community Improvement Corporation	While a CIC is comprised of some public sector representation, it's crucial to ensure that the CIC is balanced with credible private sector leaders with experience in real estate development, law, financing, and marketing. The CIC should be used as an advisory committee to facilitate communication and coordination among Corridor stakeholders.
Private Sector Experts & Developers	Pierce Township should engage private sector experts and developers to deal with the complex issues stemming from the Corridor revitalization.
Development Agreements	A development agreement is a voluntary contract between a local jurisdiction (often a city) and a property owner (typically a developer). The contract establishes the standards and conditions that govern the property's development. The developer is provided certainty that the project will be isolated from alterations in the jurisdiction's zoning laws over the course of development, but it also contracts the developer to provide benefits to the city (e.g., infrastructure improvements, public open space, monetary payment into funds, etc.) in exchange for that assurance.
Zoning	
Planned Unit Development (PUD)	The PUD district is an overlay of alternative regulations, including procedures and standards, designed to encourage the efficient use of land and resources, promote greater efficiency in public and utility services, promote orderly improvement of property in accordance with community plans, and to encourage innovation in the planning and building of all types of development. It may permit uses, as well as increases in the density or intensity of development beyond that permitted as-of-right in a zone district.



4.4 Economic Development Tools

Financing	
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	TIF allows municipalities to finance public infrastructure improvements and, in certain circumstances, residential rehabilitation. A TIF district raises funds by capturing the incremental property tax from increases in property value over time. Existing property tax collection and distribution is frozen at current levels, while the increment is diverted to a special fund that can be used for public infrastructure improvements. The property owner(s) instead makes Payments In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOTs) in an amount equal to only the increase in property taxes generated by the improvement. A disadvantage of TIF is that revenues are dependent on future recovery value increases and are difficult to predict unless a specific development project is underway in the district.
Special Improvement District	A SID is an economic development tool that allows private property owners in a self-defined area to establish a program for services or improvements aimed at the economic enhancement of the area. The area can be any size, as long as it is contiguous. The SID enables a community, neighborhood, or business district to tax itself for specific improvements and services. Property owners can pay for the program with assessments on all properties in the given area. A SID requires the formation of a non-profit organization with a Board of Directors to control collection and spending of revenues.
General Obligation (GO) Bonds	GO bonds are issued by Ohio's political subdivisions to provide funds to pay costs of permanent improvements for specific community projects and are paid off using property tax revenues. General obligation bonds provide long-term, fixed rate financing. GO bonds are secured by the full faith and credit of the municipality that issues them.
Revenue Bonds	A revenue bond is issued by a municipality for construction of projects that generate revenues (e.g., toll bridge, stadium, etc.). A revenue bond repays creditors from income generated by the project that the bond itself is funding.
Special Assessments	Special Assessments are not part of your real estate tax, but are included as a separate item on the real estate tax bill. These could include such items as ditch assessments, improvement levies such as street paving, curbs, lighting, sidewalks and sewer or water lines. The County Auditor is required by law to keep an accounting of these special assessments, to place them on the tax duplicate as separate items, and to return the money collected to the city, village, township or county office which levied the assessment.
Downtown Redevelopment Districts (DRD)	DRDs help Ohio municipalities promote the rehabilitation of historic buildings, and encourage economic development in commercial, mixed-use commercial and residential areas, and fund transportation improvements that will benefit the areas. DRDs allow the municipality to designate an area an DRD and the increase in assessed value of real property (improvements) to parcels within a DRD can be exempted. Amounts exempted are paid as service payments in lieu of taxes to be utilized for specifically enumerated purposes.



4.4 Economic Development Tools

JobsOhio Grants	
JobsOhio Economic Development Grant	Grant decisions are based on a number of project factors, including but not limited to job creation, additional payroll, fixed-asset investment commitment, project return on investment, and project location. Focuses on fixed-asset and infrastructure investment by companies, which may include the following: Land; Building; Leasehold improvements; Machinery and equipment; Moving and relocation costs of machinery and equipment (freight shipping) related to the project; Infrastructure including utility, telecommunications, information technology, etc.; Site development; Fees and material costs related to planning or feasibility studies; engineering services; and software development. Funds are disbursement based.
JobsOhio R&D Center Grant	Created to facilitate new strategic corporate R&D centers in Ohio. Such R&D Centers will support the development and commercialization of emerging technologies and/or products that align with one or more of JobsOhio’s targeted industries. Funds can be used for Qualified Research Expenses (QRE) and satisfy operational, equipment or facility needs related to: industry-driven, value-added applied research; software development; and developing technologies that can be commercialized by a corporation.
JobsOhio Revitalization Program Loan and Grant Fund	Designed to support the acceleration of redeveloping sites in Ohio. Primary focus will be placed on projects where the cost of the redevelopment and remediation is more than the value of the land and a site cannot be competitively developed in the current marketplace. An eligible site is an abandoned or under-utilized contiguous property where redevelopment for the immediate and primary purpose of job creation and retention are challenged by significant redevelopment constraints.
JobsOhio Workforce Grant	Created to promote economic development, business expansion, and job creation by providing funding for the improvement of worker skills and abilities in the State of Ohio. Created to promote economic development, business expansion, and job creation by providing funding for the improvement of worker skills and abilities in the State of Ohio.
JobsOhio - Ohio Site Inventory Program (OSIP)	Grant and low interest loans to support speculative (no identified end user) site and building development projects. Loans typically support new construction. Grants typically support items associated cost associated with items such as demolition, environmental remediation, building renovations, site preparation, and infrastructure improvements.

4.4 Economic Development Tools

State of Ohio Grants	
Land & Water Conservation Fund	The Ohio Department of Natural Resources coordinates the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program, which provides up to 50% reimbursement assistance for state and local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.
NatureWorks Grant Programs	The Ohio Department of Natural Resources coordinates the NatureWorks grant program, which provides up to 75% reimbursement assistance for local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) to for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.
Clean Ohio Brownfield Grants	The Fund can provide loans up to \$5,000,000 for environment cleanup, including demolition associated with the cleanup of hazardous substances, asbestos, lead-based paint, and petroleum. There are no job requirements for this funding, but the borrower must show their ability to repay the loan.
Transportation Enhancement (TE) Grants	Federal TE grants, administered through ODOT, fund transportation projects (e.g., transportation beautification, historic beautification, bicycle and pedestrian facilities).
Tax Credits	
Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA)	Community Reinvestment Areas are areas of land in which property owners can receive tax incentives for investing in real property improvements. The Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program is a direct incentive tax exemption program benefiting property owners who renovate existing or construct new buildings.
Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program	Provides a state tax credit up to 25 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenditures incurred during a rehabilitation projects. Applicants are eligible for no more than \$5 million in tax credits unless approved as a catalytic project.
Other Programs	
Façade Improvement Program	Façade improvement programs are incentive programs created to encourage property owners and businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings and storefronts.



4.5 Budget & Implementation Plan



Credit: Eric Rothermel on Unsplash



Credit: Bill Oxford on Unsplash



Credit: iStock



Credit: Gunbarrel Center, Bar Architects

PLANNING

PROCESS

FUNDING

= PROSPERITY

4.5 Budget & Implementation Plan

1. Establish an aligned Civic Identity for the overall Township and Corridor.

- Civic Identity Brand Story
 - Corridor Beautification, “Clean & Safe” Programming
 - Community and Business Marketing & Connection Strategy
 - Attract new businesses

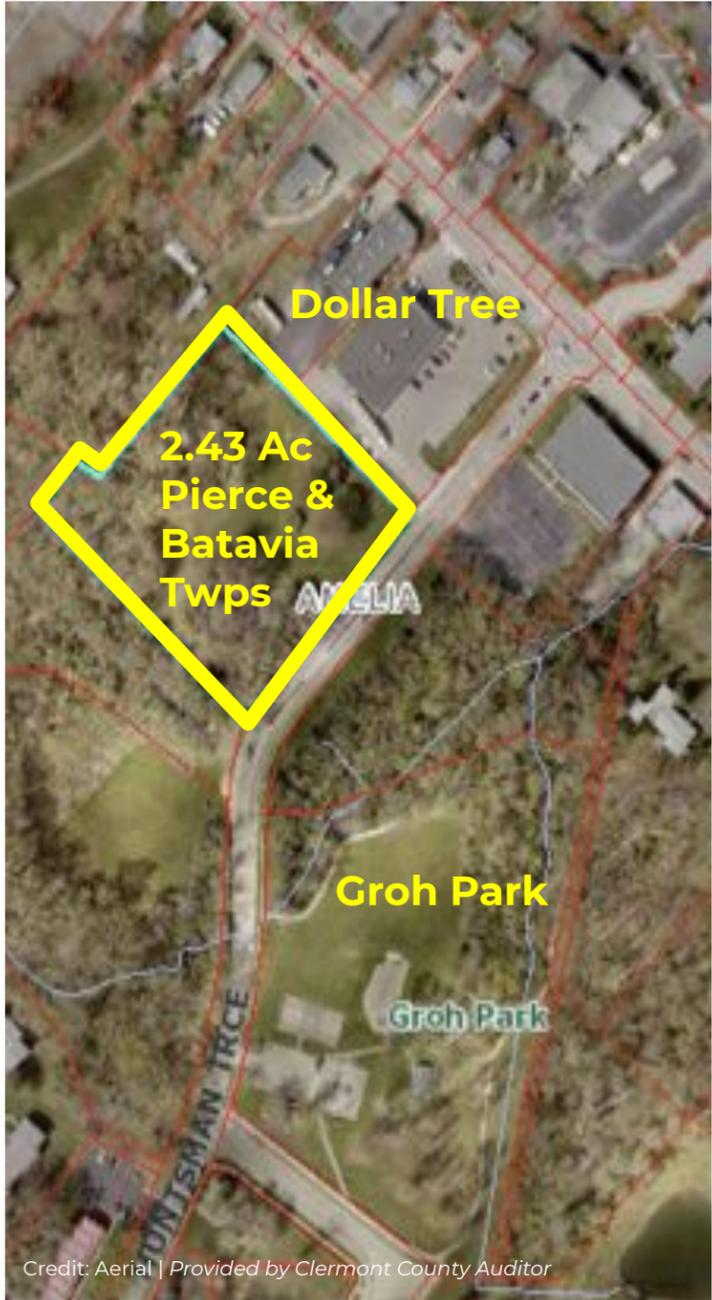
“
We want to keep the community... beautiful and safe for families to live. The convenience of shopping [at] clean businesses that provide necessary products, services, and enjoyment [are] important to a successful community.
 ”



4.5 Implementation | Planning

2. Identify potential parcels of land along the Corridor that offer the optimal development opportunities to serve as Corridor Hubs.

The township should focus on the properties identified below and begin evaluating and planning them as potential Corridor Hubs.



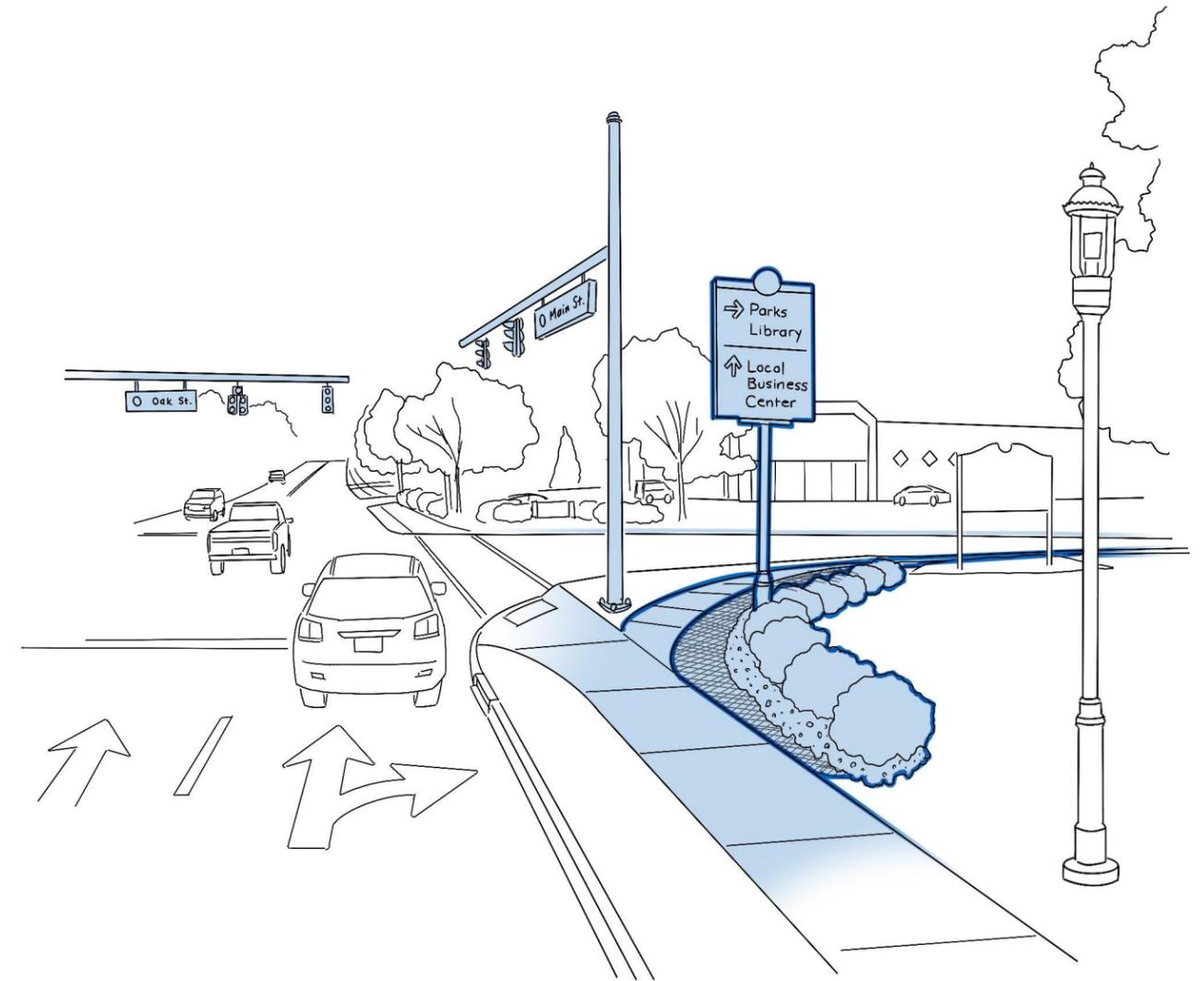
4.5 Implementation | Planning

3. Implement intuitive and comprehensive wayfinding systems to direct consumers to the “Corridor Hub.”

- Establish direct access from the corridor to the hubs from a bike / hike / and vehicular perspective in order to create an easily accessible, walkable business district
- The hubs should connect the community, businesses, recreation amenities, and cultural resources

4. Capitalize upon public spaces to create programming and entertainment for the township.

- Public Space Events Programming (park hop events)
- Provide outdoor public amenities in the form of performance and music events, festivals and other community activities



Renderings for conceptual, inspirational, and education purposes only



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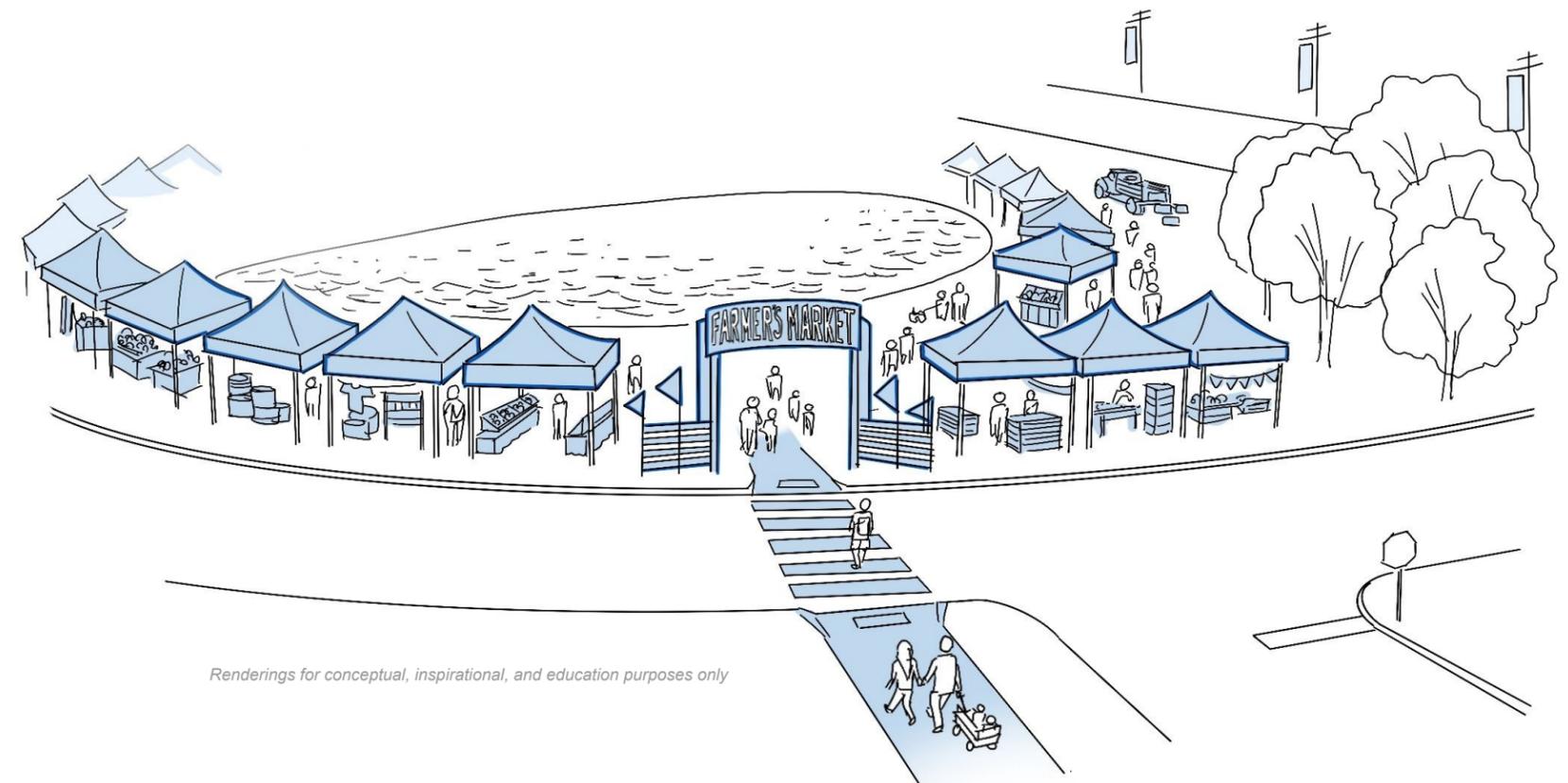
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4.5 Implementation | Planning

5. The hubs should selectively promote the right mixed-uses of office, retail, restaurant, residential, and green space to create destination hubs for residents and the region.

- Focus on uses that will keep residents from spending their dollars in Anderson and Union Townships
- Attract spending of dollars from other municipalities
- Potential uses
 - Farmer's Market
 - Casual restaurant(s)
 - Formal sit-down restaurants
 - Ice cream shop
 - Event space
 - Coffee shop
 - More retail
 - Parks



Renderings for conceptual, inspirational, and education purposes only



4.5 Implementation | Planning

6. Reimagine Pierce Township as a walkable and entertaining district with a focus on localism.

- Curate authentic experiences that can't happen with national brands
- Locally-owned business have historically been the backbone of small business districts
- People continue to “buy local” and often prefer small business over chain or national stores
- Localism is a developing trend and economic development model centered on the community, small business, essential jobs, and responsible corporate citizenship
- Use localism as a key driver to create an authentic experience and make the Corridor a destination that stands apart from competing business districts



4.5 Implementation | Process

7. Establish a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) to oversee economic development and real estate activities of the township, including the establishment and development of the Corridor Hubs.

- Authorize the CIC to create and recommend economic incentive programs and development strategies
- Authorize the CIC to handle negotiations with developers and property owners
- The CIC should work closely with the Planning & Zoning Department
- Begin evaluating potential local, state and federal funding sources for the CIC
- The CIC should explore ways it can be used to control strategic properties to advance “game changing” projects along the Corridor
- Consider having CIC representation from the former Village of Amelia and the Clermont Chamber

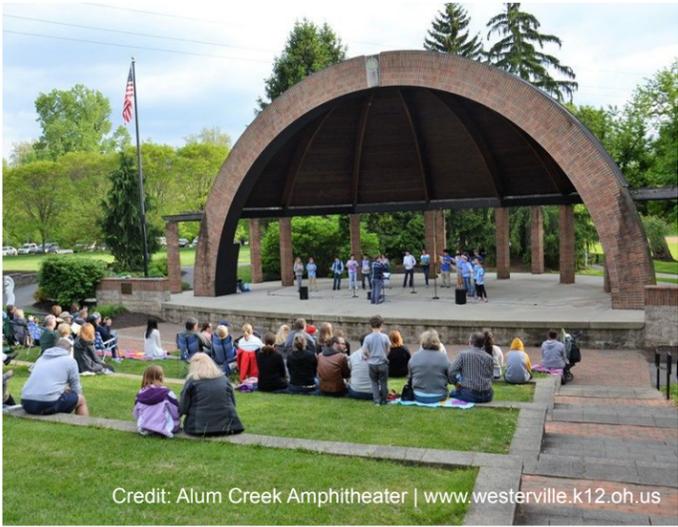


Photo by Dylan Gillis on Unsplash

Today CICs in many Townships presently serve a leadership role in promoting township and community economic development initiatives.



4.5 Implementation | Revitalization Project Funding



Project Recommendation	Potential Consultant
<p>Brand Story Development and Guidelines (Post-pandemic business recruitment)</p>	<p>Kolar Experience Institute, Red Tiger Investments</p>
<p>Event Activation and Clean & Safe Programming Plans / Management</p>	<p>Yard and Co.</p>
<p>Comprehensive Signage, Gateway, and Wayfinding System Masterplan (Vehicular, Pedestrian, biking)</p>	<p>Kolar Design</p>
<p>Comprehensive Public Art Masterplan + Implementation</p>	<p>Kolar Design</p>

4.5 Implementation | CIC Formation & Funding

Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)

Legal Structure and Purpose

CICs are not-for-profit corporations allowed per the Ohio Revised Code 1724.01(B)(1) for the sole purpose of advancing economic and real estate development.

Members

No limit on number of members.

Elected & Appointed Officials

If the CIC is “a designated agency” for a county, township, or municipality then at least 40% must be elected or appointed officials of the political subdivision. Identify appropriate elected and appointed officials. At minimum consider having the township administrator, planning & zoning administrator, and a trustee.

Private Sector Board Members

The rest of the CIC board is comprised of private sector residents and business owners. Identify potential members who have expertise in the areas of commercial real estate, property law, workforce development, civil engineering and economic development.

CIC Formation

1. Define CIC’s mission, purpose and powers
2. File Articles of Incorporation with Secretary of State
3. Must designate a Statutory Agent, Location and Purpose
4. Attorney General reviews and approves Articles of Incorporation
5. Adopt Code of Regulations
6. Governed by a Board of Directors & Officers
7. Must file Annual Financial Report with Ohio Auditor of State

Broad Powers Authorized Under ORC Section 1724.02

- Borrow money for any purpose of the CIC
- Provide loans to individuals or businesses
- Buy, lease, sell real or personal property
- Acquire the good will, business rights, real or personal property, and assets of an individual or business
- Charge fees to political subdivisions for services
- Enter into contracts with federal, state and local government
- Apply for and administer grants
- Do all acts necessary or convenient to carry out statutory powers
- Generally exempt from paying prevailing wages

Potential Funding Sources

- Township general funds—only administrative costs—unanimous vote
- State of Ohio
- State and Federal COVID Impact Grants
- Federal Cares Act Funding & Stimulus
- Membership Dues
- State & Federal Grants
- Proceeds/Fees from Property Sales
- Donations from Companies
- Contracts for Services



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Appendix & Credits

5.1 Data Appendix and Photo/Image Credits

5.1 Data Appendix & Photo/Image Credits

Data Appendix

Section 2.1 Existing Work Product Analysis

City of Amelia Comprehensive Plan (May 2000)

Prior to its comprehensive plan in 2000, Amelia never had a strategy to guide its growth and development, which was quickly consuming its undeveloped land. Continuous traffic congestion was affecting the community's quality of life and economic viability. The comprehensive plan contained the goals, policies, vision and plan for its future growth and development. A major focus of the plan was Amelia's business district along Main Street (i.e., SR-125).

Pierce Township Land Use Plan Update (November 2013)

Pierce Township adopted zoning in 1961 and updated those regulations in 2010 to maintain a modernized set of land use regulations that suit the Township's needs. The plan is to act as a land use blueprint directing Pierce Township officials to attain economic stability and continue peaceful enjoyment for its citizens. Although the plan does not change zoning, or how someone may legally use their land, it points the way for changes judged necessary to meet conditions of the foreseeable future. The intent of this plan is answering the pertinent question of "How do we want to develop over the next 5 years?"

Pierce Township Comprehensive Economic Plan (Sep. 2016)

The Comprehensive Plan provides a list of action items to be worked on in order for Pierce Township to truly achieve its end economic goals for its future. The plan should be viewed as a work in progress.

2020 Amelia Community Survey (Nov. 06, 2020)

In November 2019, the residents of the former Amelia Village voted to dissolve their Village. As a result, the Zoning framework in place dissolved as well. As a result, the Board of Trustees undertook an effort to study and further build upon existing and evolving plans/events in the Amelia Neighborhood. As such, the Township crafted the 2020 Community Survey focused on Amelia with the intent of helping to gain focus for: 1) scope of the Amelia study; 2) provide residents a new outlet to communicate, outside of traditional formats; 3) obtain key information from the community regarding issues and focus areas for improvement/points of strength.

SR 125 Corridor Study (Sep. 2020)

Initiated by the Pierce Township Board of Trustees to serve as the planning framework for the re-development and transformation of the corridor. The study identifies specific nodes that may have re-development potential for focusing efforts and future investment dollars, thereby increasing density and dollars. The study consist of two primary components: (i) a traffic and infrastructure analysis; and (ii) land use & zoning recommendations. The study did not cover Amelia portion of the Corridor.

Section 2.3 Market Research & Analysis

The New Localism (May 13, 2020)

Article by Bruce Katz and Jeremy Nowak focusing on the impact of COVID-19 on Main Street small businesses across the United States and recommending communities establish (and the federal government support) Main Street Regenerators to speed the revival of our business districts — downtowns, town centers, commercial corridors, university districts, classic Main Streets themselves — where community-serving enterprises congregate and co-locate.

Cincinnati Business Courier: Fifth Third launches new initiative for COVID-impacted businesses. (Dec. 14, 2020)

The December 14, 2020, online edition of the Cincinnati Business Courier describing Fifth Third Bank's announcement of "the launch of the Greater Cincinnati Covid-19 Small Business Response and Recovery Initiative to provide businesses with 25 or fewer employees in low- to moderate-income communities with advice and access to capital via loan and grant programs, according to a release. Emphasis will be given to companies with five or fewer employees."

The Impact of COVID-19 on Small Businesses: Findings from Main Street America's Small Business Survey (April 09, 2020)

Main Street America online survey assessing the impact of the COVID-19 on the approximately 300,000 small businesses across the network. Specifically, this survey was designed to help us understand small businesses' ability to withstand what may be several months of suppressed revenue and what kinds of support programs will have the most impact.

Section 2.4 Economic Development & Real Estate Discovery

Pierce Township & Village of Amelia 2019 Demographics

Data for the study area was gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Section 3.3 Placemaking and Vision Collaboration

[Link to raw interview notes](#)

4.5 Implementation

CIC Formation & Potential Funding

Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 1724.01
State of Ohio Auditor
County Commissioners Association of Ohio

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